

COSIMO I

DUKE OF FLORENCE

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

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*Angele Bronzino*

COSIMO I, DUKE OF FLORENCE

*Photo Brogi*

**COSIMO I  
DUKE OF FLORENCE**

BY

**CECILY BOOTH**

**CAMBRIDGE  
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS**

**1921**

AD JOANNAM MEAM

AUSPICE TE SCRIPTUM, CARISSIMA, SUME LIBELLUM;  
EXIGUUM MAGNI PIGNUS AMORIS ERIT.

“Or che bisogna dir più, che più s’ ha d’ aggiungere a tante gran cose? Se non che questa casa de’ Medici é stata una casa fatale : e il gran Cosimo vecchio, che tanto valse e tanto potè essendo privato cittadino, che ottenne il principato civile nella città e fece tante gran cose... ben pareva che questo saputo vecchio s’ avvedesse che della sua famiglia dovessero uscir tanti cardinali, papi, duchi, principi e regine, e che a tanta grandezza egli si affaticasse di apparecchiare li palazzi e le stanze regali al principe assoluto, che alla fine doveva uscire del suo sangue, il quale non più civilmente ma regiamente governasse e divenisse quale ora si vede Cosimo duca di Firenze e Siena.”

(VINCENZO FEDELLI, Venetian Ambassador  
to Florence, 1561.)

## PREFACE

IN the pages that follow I have tried to let Cosimo speak for himself and vindicate his character, endeavouring to avoid any appearance of partisanship. Yet, now that I take leave of him, I may perhaps confess that, the more I have studied his life, the more it has surprised me that the popular verdict on him has been so unfavourable. The general reader is left far too much under the impression that, after the fall of the Republic, there is not a good word to be said for the rulers of Florence, and I am tempted to protest that Cosimo, in spite of many defects, was a reformer, and on the whole a better governor than Florence deserved. We are nowadays apt to say glibly that it is better to have liberty, however bad the consequent government may be, than to be well ruled under an autocrat. But, though this is no doubt true in the main, the history of the Italian republics does suggest that a limit should be set to the existence of a rule which was seldom peaceful and invariably partisan, and such a limit had undoubtedly been reached in the case both of Florence and Siena. Cosimo may fairly be said to have disciplined two hopelessly factious states; a necessary preliminary to their eventually attaining a greater degree of freedom and order than was ever possible when the Arti Maggiori in Florence strove for the mastery with the Arti Minori, or when Siena incessantly varied the numbers of her councillors.

As a man, Cosimo, if not a genial figure, is on the whole far more attractive than his contemporaries in Italy, and undoubtedly his qualities of concentration and steadfastness are pleasing in such an age of "haste, half-work and disarray." As a ruler, I consider that he, more than anyone before him, strove to work for the

good of Florence, and it is an unjust fate which has led him to be associated with his brilliant but unscrupulous kinsmen, Cosimo il Vecchio and Lorenzo il Magnifico, who, though they had chiefly in mind their own advantage and enjoyment have yet, perhaps by some charm of personality, gained almost undue applause for their actions.

It is, I think, significant that those writers who have most closely studied his life are those who are most disposed to champion him.

I am glad to have the opportunity of expressing my thanks and gratitude to those who have helped me in the writing of this book. I desire especially to mention Commendatore Guido Biagi of the Laurentian Library, who was always ready to supply names of authorities, to point out possibilities of research, and to clear up difficulties in Italian. Nor must I forget the courtesy of the Keeper of the Archives in Florence, both in allowing me access to them and in advising what documents to consult. I have tried to be scrupulously careful not to quote as from the archives without having done all I could to ascertain whether or no a document had been already printed. But this is made peculiarly difficult by the practice common in Italy of publishing one or two letters at a time in fugitive publications as wedding gifts. If, therefore, any such publications have escaped my notice, I can but express my real regret for having inadvertently failed to refer to them.

My best thanks are also due to Miss J. Paterson and Miss Ada Briggs for unwearied care in revising and correcting my manuscript, and to Mr E. Armstrong and the Head Master of Eton for the kindest and most helpful criticism.

CECILY BOOTH.

FLORENCE,  
*September, 1920.*

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# CHAPTER I

## THE MEDICI IN FLORENCE—COSIMO'S KINSMEN— HIS BIRTH—DEATH OF GIOVANNI DELLE BANDE NERE—COSIMO AT VENICE

THE name of Medici can still rouse partisanship, and, if it is no easy task to resist the glamour that brightens the memory of Lorenzo the Magnificent, still harder is it to clear our minds of the dark suspicions with which fiction and prejudice have blackened that of Cosimo I, Duke of Florence, first Grand Duke of Tuscany. Of late years, indeed, he has in the main been vindicated, but even now his story is less familiar than that of the earlier Medici. Italian history of the sixteenth century is less interesting and less known to English readers than that of the great fifteenth century, and the glory of Florence passes to Ferrara, where there still linger more than echoes of the Renaissance. Thus we eagerly trace the features of the elder line of the Medici in Botticelli's or Benozzo's frescoes, we learn something of that elder Cosimo (*Cosimo il Vecchio*) who first taught his kinsmen the art of ruling while seeming but to suggest, and of his brilliant grandson, Lorenzo *il Magnifico*, who skilfully applied such teaching and made it his guide when the fate of Florence was in his hands. We have a distinct if imperfect notion of their statesmanship, their love of art, their splendid liberality in the cause of scholarship and culture. But the younger Cosimo, with whom we are now concerned, we are apt to dismiss as one of a degenerate line of Dukes, none too reputable in their lives, possessed of an hereditary skill in concocting poisons. And indeed, Cosimo *il Vecchio* and Lorenzo *il Magnifico* are associated with a nobler period of their country's

history; their memory, linked to the great age of Florentine art and beauty (which they so truly loved), has a magic that the Grand Duke's must forego. Yet he too set his mark on Florence, perhaps more tangibly and lastingly than any other of her rulers, so that, go where we may, we cannot but perceive its traces. Cosimo's stern features meet our eyes, continually repeated, now from the arches of the long arcades of the Uffizi, now over the Opera del Duomo, now above the doorway of the Hospital of the Innocenti, surprising us again as we roam in this or that old street. His bronze statue is no unconsidered monument even under the shadow of the great Palazzo Vecchio, while in memory of him both palace and square were renamed Palazzo and Piazza del Granduca. Not till our own day were the old names restored. In the chapel of the Palazzo Vecchio, Cosimo's grave face and tall red-robed figure make no unfitting pendant to the portrait of Cosimo il Vecchio, and frontispieces, miniatures, medals, familiarise us almost to satiety with his close-trimmed hair and beard, his inflexible mouth. As for the Medici *palle*<sup>1</sup>, churches, palaces, villas, tapestries, one and all bear them set ovalwise in the escutcheon as Cosimo placed them. He haunts us, as it were, and will not let us rest till we have learnt more of a man who looms so large in the Florence of his day.

And, if we pursue the search, Cosimo, cleared of the calumnies that once made him a monstrous figure, appears well worthy to bear the name of his prudent and statesmanlike kinsman of a past generation, fully as great a lover of Tuscany as the Cosimo entitled *Pater Patriae*. To accuse him of harsh and tyrannical dealings is beside the mark, for Cosimo was, after all, a

<sup>1</sup> The roundels, technically known as *torteaux*, which were the coat of arms of the Medici family, according to English heraldry. *Palle*, balls, is the Italian blazon.

man of his times and, in the sixteenth century (filled as it is with the excesses and bitterness of religious wars), governors exempt from those defects are hard to find. But it is undeniable that he, alone in Italy, kept a firm front, opposing all undue pretensions on the part of Charles V and Philip II, forcing imperial and Spanish ministers to respect his duchy. In that age of unpreparedness and inefficiency, Cosimo alone was ever ready and prompt to defend his shores against the Turks, ever able to provide a galley for the great naval enterprises of the day, from the relief of Malta to the battle of Lepanto. His coffers were always full, his soldiers ready and disciplined, and though taxation pressed heavily, in return for it he might point to the restored prosperity of Tuscany, the peace within her borders and the equal justice never before known in Florence. Nor is his story wanting in interest, though less lurid than prejudice has painted it. Cosimo lived in an age of transition, and he, whose father was the last great Italian *condottiere*, who was born before the sack of Rome, lived to see the Counter-Reformation triumphant and Spanish ascendancy established almost throughout Italy.

But the change was not long in coming. The year of Cosimo's birth, 1519, saw Charles V elected Emperor, and seven years later the only general who might possibly have checked the imperial advance was dead of a gunshot wound—Giovanni de' Medici, delle Bande Nere, whose little son, Cosimo, was too young to have more than a dim memory of his black-browed father. This was in 1526; 1525 had seen the battle of Pavia and the downfall of French hopes, with Francis I a prisoner in the hands of Charles V; two years later, Spain was predominant in the peninsula and Bourbon had marched to the sack of Rome; two more years passed and Florence, after her heroic defence, was in the hands of Emperor and Pope, and Clement VII could gloat over the downfall of the republic which had

so contemptuously chased away his kinsmen in the flush of patriotism. Up till now the rule of the Medici in Florence had been but intermittent, and yet another transition had to occur before a firm hand assured their ascendancy.

Thus Cosimo looking back, may have realised that his childhood had been not merely a stirring time, but the very ending of an epoch in his country's history, and that he, linked by many bonds to the past, in many ways a typical sober Florentine citizen, was yet more a product of the new dispensation than of the old. He was born in the pontificate of Leo X, but before his death Gregory XIII had struck the medal commemorating the deliverance of orthodox France by the massacre of St Bartholomew's Day. Cosimo too, like the Popes, moved with the times, but it was not the worst influences of his day which most affected him.

We must now turn for a little to the fortunes of the Medici in Florence where, openly or secretly, they had ruled for some three-quarters of a century. Chased away in 1494 during the fervour of Savonarola's revival, they were brought back in triumph by the help of papal and Spanish troops in 1512, when, as the phrase went, Cardinal Giovanni's purple stockings were splashed with blood at the sack of Prato. For a few years after this the Cardinal's brother, Giuliano, best of the sons of Lorenzo il Magnifico, governed Florence, but the race had degenerated. He died in 1516 in the prime of life and three years later his nephew Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino, who succeeded him as the nominal ruler of Florence, died also, worn out by dissipation before he was thirty. Lorenzo, but for his little daughter, Caterina, was the last of the legitimate Medici of the elder line and Florence, after a few tranquil years under Cardinal Giulio de' Medici (who never, when Pope, showed the same skill as a statesman), fell to the

lot of two young bastards—Ippolito, son of Giuliano di Lorenzo, and Alessandro, reputed the son of the younger Lorenzo. These shared the fate of others of their family and were forced to flee when, in 1527, encouraged by the discomfiture of Clement VII after the sack of Rome, Florence roused herself to strike a last blow for independence. But Alessandro, in an evil hour for himself and for his city, was restored as first Duke of Florence in 1531 when, worn-out, betrayed, forsaken, she had yielded to the papal and imperial troops. It is strange that this heavy, unprepossessing youth, thick-lipped and low-browed, of whom few good qualities have been recorded, should have been preferred before his cousin Ippolito, a young man of promise and of a vigorous stirring nature, only too ill-suited to the profession of Churchman into which he had been forced. Indeed, this fact and the great partiality shown towards him by Clement VII perhaps gave rise to the scandalous rumour that the Pope, and not, as was commonly reported, Lorenzo the younger, Duke of Urbino, was the father of Alessandro. We, however, are mainly concerned with the junior collateral line of the Medici, descended from Lorenzo di Giovanni, brother of Cosimo il Vecchio and now represented by our Cosimo as its head, and by his cousins in the second degree, Lorenzino and Giuliano, sons of Pier Francesco de' Medici, the great-grandson of Lorenzo<sup>1</sup>. These cadets of the house of Medici had ever favoured the people, and when, in 1494, Piero di Lorenzo, the foolish son of a wise father, was driven out by a popular rising, Giovanni, our Cosimo's grandfather, with his brother Lorenzo exchanged the Medicean shield on their houses for the red cross on a field argent of the people of Florence<sup>2</sup>. This same

<sup>1</sup> See p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> L. A. Ferrai, *Lorenzino de' Medici e la società cortegiana del Cinquecento* (Milan, 1891), p. 4.

Giovanni was a man of some individuality and had married the famous Caterina Sforza who handed on her warlike qualities to Cosimo's father, Giovanni delle Bande Nere. There is no need to linger much over this well-known Captain, looked on by some as the last hope of Italian patriotism, untimely cut off, but perhaps more truly judged to have been the last great Italian *condottiere* of the Renaissance. His grim figure, glowering from its niche on the Lung' Arno, is known to every lover of Florence and his name familiar to every reader of Browning:

...Baccio's marble,...  
.....where sits and menaces  
John of the Black Bands with the upright spear<sup>1</sup>.

For the present purpose it suffices to suggest a certain likeness in the early lives of Giovanni and his son; each was an only child, and orphaned, one at birth, the other when he was but seven; each was brought up by a careful mother in quiet country surroundings, though Cosimo, in spite of his lifelong love of freedom and open air, was, sooner than his father, to hear the clash of arms and observe the intrigues of a world which in the end absorbed him as fully as it did Giovanni. We may note as Cosimo's probable inheritance from his father, those gifts of judgment and discernment which led him to choose his subordinates so wisely, that power of organisation and of enforcing discipline, which so conspicuously aided him in the art of civil government, for these were the qualities which had promised so great a career to Giovanni. From him, too, and his Sforza ancestry, Cosimo may have inherited that robust health and bodily vigour, refreshing to read of in those days of physical and mental degeneracy. Giovanni was dark, black-browed and

<sup>1</sup> See also *The Medici*, by Colonel (now General) G. Young, C.B. (Murray, 1909).



*Giorgio Vasari*

*Photo Brogi*

**MARIA SALVIATI**

From a picture in the Palazzo Vecchio



rugged of feature, thick set, and sturdy rather than graceful, but Cosimo was of taller build and fairer in colouring with chestnut hair; by no means an ill-looking man in a family usually harsh-featured, for his mother, Maria Salviati, too, was half a Medici (daughter of Lucrezia di Lorenzo) and, "white-faced and large-eyed, was said to resemble her uncle, Leo X<sup>1</sup>." This paleness, according to an old manuscript, was not natural to her, but the result of treatment for redness of face, which had a disastrous effect on her health<sup>2</sup>. Such a touch of human weakness and vanity is no unpleasing trait in one who was otherwise a paragon of good sense and domestic virtues. Rather than blame poor Maria for her ill-advised care of her complexion, we may feel the pathos of her having tried, by every available means, to make herself attractive to her faithless husband. In Maria the thrifty Florentine housewife was personified, and her maxims of simplicity and frugality were all the more valuable when Duke Alessandro's rule encouraged laxity of manners and increased luxury. Her letters are interesting and characteristic, mingling with references to much-needed economy (for which Giovanni was never famous) more intimate touches which seem to betray hunger for an affection which, if it ever was hers, was sadly soon withdrawn. Indeed, a letter written as early as the first year of their marriage already has a hint of sarcasm. "I beg you not to forget me," she writes; "I sent you a diamond by Ramazotto; I presume it will have reached your most delicate hands<sup>3</sup>."

The varying tones of her letters appear in the following with its matter-of-fact beginning and its

<sup>1</sup> Ferrai, p. 26, note One would have expected the resemblance to lie rather in the prominence than the largeness of the eyes

<sup>2</sup> C. Guasti, *Giornale Storico degli Archivi Toscani*, vol. II. p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> *Archivio Storico italiano*, 1902. Pierre Gauthiez, *Nuovi documenti intorno a Giovanni delle Bande Nere*, p. 327.

sudden outburst. What shall she do, she asks, with the hounds at the villa of Castello?:

For they devour three bushels (staia) of bread a day...and if you do not that which you promised me ere you went away, you will bring me to kill myself with my own hands...I am lodged in Sant' Orsola, for since I am bereft of my husband, I have no spirit to suffer the company of other folk<sup>1</sup>.

More than one of these early letters is signed *la vostra consorte sconsolata*, but in less than two years the note is changed to one of reproach for Giovanni's neglect and infidelity, as when she says:

I write no more, save to commend myself to you, knowing that I but waste the time. And as for Cosimino, I will say nought, save that I pray you hold him dear, for I know that you care less for him than for me and 'twere impossible to go beyond that<sup>2</sup>.

Again she says, betraying her bitterness of spirit:

So seldom do I hear from Vostra Signoria that I doubt you are too much taken up with reading of my letters to have time left for answering of them.

But on this occasion she had, it appears, given Giovanni an excuse for his silence by disobeying a somewhat tyrannical order, and she goes on to deprecate his anger on learning she had been abroad:

I had not thought you would take it so ill, or I had not gone, and henceforth I will on no account go away...and more than one has told me you desire your son should stay in your house, and that if I take him abroad you would be wroth; and in truth I tell you that neither he nor I will lodge out of your house in future; and as for the past, I beg you forgive me, for the love you bear your son<sup>3</sup>.

Indeed, notwithstanding Maria's disparaging words as to Giovanni's affection for Cosimo, it is chiefly on him that she dwells in her letters:

"As to Cosimo," she writes for example, "Vostra Signoria must know that he does very well, and indeed I love him so that of

<sup>1</sup> P. Gauthiez, *A.S.I.* 1902, p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 330.

<sup>3</sup> G. Milanesi, *A.S.I.* N.S. vol. VIII. pt. i. p. 13.

necessity he could not do ill and I well, so that when I see him all the grief for your absence on a sudden vanishes and I take great comfort<sup>1</sup>."

Sarcasm is a dangerous weapon and it may be that poor Maria was one of those unhappy people whose warm affections do not meet with due response, owing to some lack of tact, some bitterness, some want of that personal charm to which so much is forgiven. In spite of her efforts to improve her complexion, in other ways she neglected herself, as in the matter of dress. But during Cosimo's young days, she had scope for her undeniable powers of mind while the guiding and forwarding of his fortunes was in her hands, and these no doubt were her happiest years. Cosimo, little grateful as he showed himself, had more than one good quality for which to thank her, such as the wisdom and poise of the prudent Salviati family and a certain dignity noticeable alike in Maria and in her mother Lucrezia. Only when her affections misled her did Maria lose her sureness of touch and judgment.

Giovanni delle Bande Nere was in Rome when the  
1519 following letter reached him from Francesco  
Fortunati, the steward of his too often involved  
affairs:

*Ihesus Maria Illustris Domine unice:* At this moment, which is to say the<sup>2</sup>...hour of the...day of the present month<sup>3</sup>, Madonna Maria your wife has given birth to a fine male child, and up to now she does well; all good be with her! Please you order what we have to do, and who is to hold him at the font and stand Godfather, for, as I said in an earlier letter, if it liked you to have as Godfather the

<sup>1</sup> P Gauthiez, *A S I.* 1902, p. 335.

<sup>2</sup> Blanks as above in the original.

<sup>3</sup> Cosimo's birth is given sometimes as the 11th and sometimes as the 12th June, 1519. The entry in the *libri dei battezzati* is as follows: "Lunedì addì detto Cosimo Giuliano et Romolo del Signor Giovanni Pierfrancesco de' Medici, pop. di S Lorenzo nato addì 12 detto hore 12/1," C. Guasti, *Giornale Storico degli Archivi Toscani*, vol. II p. 22.

Santità del Nostro Signore<sup>1</sup> with all the college of Cardinals, it would in no wise displease us<sup>2</sup>.

The dates left blank by Fortunati should be filled in as June 11 or 12, 1519, and it was in Palazzo Salviati that the child was born, a house worthy of rich Florentines. It had lately been restored by Bramante Lazzeri and boasted a colonnaded *cortile* in the style of Michelozzo and a wide staircase, duly blazoned with the arms of Salviati<sup>3</sup> (gules, three bendlets crenelly, or). A birthplace typical in fact of the two sides of Florentine life, for this stately Palazzo, built round the severe quadrangle, faced the narrow bustling Corso, in the very heart of Florence, doubtless ringing with street cries and full of turbulent life. Cosimo's birth, so goes the tale, did not pass unnoticed, for the peasants of il Trebbio in the Mugello (where lay Giovanni's villa), no sooner had the news reached them, lighted bonfires on all the hills. Answering fires were visible throughout Tuscany and as far as the papal Romagna where men said:

Tuscany's beacons are alight: doubtless our holy Father the Pope, who is a Florentine, hath had some great good fortune<sup>4</sup>.

So from the Mugello to the Adriatic, red flames shone in the sky; a stormy omen, which had less fulfilment than Cosimo's enemies would have wished. On the contrary good fortune even now smiled on him. Leo X was more than ready to stand Godfather and sufficiently interested in the matter to send imperative orders that he should be named Cosimo, "to revive," as he said, "the memory of the wisest, the bravest and most prudent man yet born to the house of Medici<sup>5</sup>."

We do not know when first Giovanni saw his little

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* the Pope.

<sup>2</sup> G. Milanesi, *A.S.I.* N.S. vol. VIII. pt. i. document 50.

<sup>3</sup> P. Gauthiez, *Jean des Bandes Noires*, p. 65.

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*, p. 118.

<sup>5</sup> *Idem*, p. 116.

son, but *Le Brillant de la Royne*<sup>1</sup> gives us a glimpse of him which Cosimo in later years may have liked to recall or to fancy he recalled. The scene was still the dark Salviati house where his nurse was holding the baby at a window when, with a jingle and a clatter, Giovanni delle Bande Nere rode by. Looking up he saw his son and cried to the nurse: "Throw him down!" The nurse (very pardonably) hesitated, but her master roared again: "Throw him down, I will have you do it!" Shutting her eyes, she let the child go and in a moment he found himself gripped in a rough embrace and heartily kissed by his father, delighted that he neither screamed nor struggled. "Ay, you'll be a prince, 'tis your lot," he muttered, and if the logic seems weak, no doubt the correctness of the prophecy may excuse much.

However, Cosimo was not left long in Florence where the news of his father's brave deeds might ring through the narrow Corso; his mother soon took him to the quiet villa of il Trebbio in the valley of the Mugello, north of Florence. There she watched him grow tall and strong and active, and consoled herself as best she could with his society for the scandalous unfaithfulness of her husband. Soldiers, indeed, often think licence their due, and we are in the sixteenth century, yet Giovanni's behaviour seems to have been more flagrant than usual, and his close friendship with Pietro Aretino can have had no very elevating effect on him. Little did he think of his pale-faced wife, and the time he never could spare for writing to her was more than once devoted to long letters destined for women of greater charms. Maria, when she wrote, no longer referred to her own feelings, no longer conjured him by his affection for her; it was on Cosimo that all her hopes were set, and if she asked a favour or begged more earnestly than usual for a

<sup>1</sup> *Le Brillant de la Royne*, P. de Boissat (Lyon, 1613), quoted also by M. Gauthiez.

reply, it must needs be in his name; "for the love you bear your son," was the changed formula.

Then came Cosimo's first visit to Rome whither his mother went in the spring of 1524 to safeguard her husband's interests which she wisely judged were in bad hands. The arrival of Alessandro and Ippolito in Florence as nominal rulers boded no good to the younger line of Medici and the new Pope, Clement VII (himself a bastard), was unlikely to look with favour on the legitimate branch of his family. Before her journey Maria had not failed to warn Giovanni, heedless of his home affairs amid the excitement of the imperial camp.

"Il Cardinale Nostro<sup>1</sup>," she writes on December 31, 1523, "will probably go to Bologna now these young sprigs have come, and you may take it that the times are changed; I beg you," she concludes, "not to let yourself be lulled to sleep, with things being done as they are because you are distant (coteste cose di costà che si e' fanno perchè voi istiate discosto)<sup>2</sup>."

Outwardly all went well on the Roman visit, of which Ammirato gives a pleasant picture, probably correct in the main, although he refers to Alessandro and Ippolito as also there: possibly they had left Florence for a visit to their kinsman.

"Cosimo," he writes, "was taken to Rome when very small in the first year of Clement VII's pontificate, and was brought up<sup>3</sup> with Caterina, Ippolito and Alessandro de' Medici. For, since his maternal grandfather Jacopo Salviati dwelt in the Borgo, in the Palazzo of the Priorato di Roma, and the Pope's nephews in the Palazzo dell' Aquila, the children by means of a door which was between the two houses, were continually together. Cosimo and Caterina however had the worst of it, for being of the same age and younger than the other two, they were often overmastered by them in their childish contests."

<sup>1</sup> ? Cardinal Salviati, for though Milanesi judges she refers to Giulio de' Medici, he had already been elected Pope on Nov. 19, 1523.

<sup>2</sup> G. Milanesi, *A.S.I. N.S. 1859*, vol. ix pt. i. p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> N.B. Maria was only in Rome for about three months. Ammirato, *Opuscoli*, vol. III. p. 208 (Firenze, 1642).

But from Maria's point of view things were to all appearance satisfactory. "La Santità di Nostro Signore," she writes to Giovanni shortly after her arrival, "sent for Cosimo and gave him all the caresses in the world and kissed him an infinite number of times<sup>1</sup>." Some ten days later she sends him word of Clement's profuse, but always vague, promises, and by the end of May she was on her way back again, having at least secured some thousand ducats from the Pope's treasury. Cosimo, a somewhat passive figure at this time, showed his usual serenity on his travels, for Maria reports: "Cosimo does excellently and is in nowise distressed by these journeyings<sup>2</sup>."

Meanwhile Giovanni was still away in the north, fighting now for Charles, now for Francis, and hindered by a gunshot wound from taking part in the disastrous battle of February 24, 1525, when the imperial generals won Charles V his first great victory at Pavia. Who can say whether Giovanni's presence might not have saved Francis I from imprisonment and tarnished honour? For Giovanni, rather than a patriot, was a fine soldier, with the makings of a great general. Ready as he was for his own ends to sell his services to Emperor or King, his longer life might indeed have added new glory to Italian arms, but would probably have done little for the cause of Italian liberty. In the absence of any soldier as single-hearted as he was brilliant it was with other weapons than the sword that his son was to labour to arrest the growth of Spanish influence in Italy.

Giovanni delle Bande Nere, like Bayard of far more deathless fame, was destined to be mortally wounded in an obscure skirmish;—Bayard while guarding his general's retreat, Giovanni while delaying the descent into Lombardy of Frundsberg's troops who, after his

<sup>1</sup> G. Milanesi, *loc. cit.* p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, vol. ix. pt. ii. p. 123.

death, were free to march on to the sack of Rome. Giovanni dead, no check to their movements would be given by the Gonfaloniere of the Church, leader of the papal army, for Francesco Maria I della Rovere had not yet forgotten that it was the kinsman of Clement VII who had for a time robbed him of his Duchy of Urbino. The temporal power of the Popes had its inconveniences, and papal nepotism was sometimes paid for dearly.

The details of Giovanni's death at Mantua, his heroic stoicism under the amputation of his leg, and his patience at the end have too often been told to need retelling here. His wife was not with him, and it was in the arms of Pietro Aretino that he died. Pietro, too, it was who wrote to console his widow, trying to comfort her by reporting how the talk on all sides said of Giovanni: "One of nature's miracles is dead; the model of ancient valour has come to his end; the right hand of the war has vanished." To all this rhetoric Maria had but the sadly simple rejoinder that, "if Giovanni's death was a grief to Pietro, as for her, its sorrow pierced her heart and soul<sup>1</sup>." And, by her constancy to his memory, she proved that these were not the words of a passing mood, but the expression of true feeling.

Maria Salviati could not allow herself much luxury of grief; she needed to keep her wits about her and attend to the safety of her son. For it was no secret that Clement VII felt more joy than sorrow at the news of the death of Giovanni, which to him meant the downfall of the hated Pierfrancesco line. The citizens of Florence, though they did not share his rancour, yet were for the moment chiefly interested in the fortunes of the young Alessandro and Ippolito, who seemed likely to be of greater importance in their lives than the little Cosimo. Reflecting on this, and observing,

<sup>1</sup> G. Milanesi, *loc. cit.* p. 143.



*Giorgio Vasari*

COSIMO AS A BOY  
From a picture in the Palazzo Vecchio

*Photo Bragi*



open rejoicings among the papal party, Maria resolved to withdraw to Venice. In Florence, a turbulent rising was reasonably to be dreaded, and did she retreat to il Trebbio there was no security from marauding troops, the lawless Lutheran soldiers of Frundsberg being already on their way south. But Venice was a safer refuge than most Italian cities and there, moreover, the services of Giovanni delle Bande Nere, late Captain-General of the Republic, were still fresh in men's minds and the Signory might well extend special protection to his son. For every reason, then, it seemed advisable for a time to leave Florence. The rupture of Charles V with Clement VII of which the present outcome was shortly to be the Constable Bourbon's march on Rome might seriously affect the position of the Medici in their native town, and Maria could not then foresee the effect to be produced by the later reconciliation of Pope and Emperor. Sending Cosimo on beforehand she did not herself follow until Florence had become an unsafe abode for one of her family.

Descriptions of Cosimo's journey to Venice are not wanting and Ammirato gives a vivid picture of the start<sup>1</sup>. Cosimo was sent off in charge of his tutor, Pier Francesco Riccio. He was ignorant of his father's death and so loth to leave his mother that Riccio proceeded by way of stratagem, urging him to come with him towards the Porta San Gallo, where they would pay a visit of devotion to the shrine of the Vergine della Quercia. To this the seven-year-old Cosimo pertinently enough replied that they were going the wrong way, but on one pretext or another Riccio led him to where men and horses were awaiting them. Finding himself on the point of being carried off from his mother, Cosimo fought and struggled, calling the priest a thief and an assassin (the favourite Italian phrase), and with great trouble he was put on one of

<sup>1</sup> Published by Signor Guasti from an unpublished version of Ammirato's *Opuscoli in Giornale Storico degli Archivi Toscani*, vol. II.

the horses. From this point the tale is taken up by Camerino, a servant of Maria's, apparently sent by her to keep an eye on the tutor<sup>1</sup>:

"All the way to Castello<sup>2</sup>," writes Camerino more briefly, "el Signor Cosimo did nought but cry...but in the evening when we were arrived he quieted down. The Saturday following he had his horse made ready and Vostra Signoria may rest assured that for a full hour...he made him trot and turn...(as if he were saying: 'I must needs go where I cannot do thus') then, dismounting, he had the nets spread, and while he was yet in the house there was taken a number of merles, thrushes and other birds; they were brought to him in the house. Then he said to me: 'Go, have the small net spread, for I would these little creatures were taken twice over'.... The evening come, he left the birds and said he desired Vostra Signoria should have your share of them. The morning following when all was made ready to send them by Benedetto, there came Calcagno (another servant) and knocked. The master (Riccio) asked: 'What news is there?' 'Ill news,' said Calcagno. He (Cosimo) heard it and said: 'Master, what is this Calcagno says?' The master tried to quiet him, that he should not know, but he was ill at ease like us, and seeing us weep, he too had a mind to weep. Then came Benedetto, and said we must be off."

That day they reached Cafaggiuolo, the villa in the hills belonging to Cosimo's cousins, Lorenzo<sup>3</sup> and Giuliano: At Cafaggiuolo, Lorenzo ran to meet him (for he too knew nothing), and there was great rejoicing, and the next morning we set out a little before daylight.

The two cousins rode with him, their mother Maria Soderini being anxious that they too should seek safety at Venice:

"When once the Alps were passed," goes on Camerino, "Sua Signoria made me dismount and he mounted and went as far as Marradi, where many came to greet him, with arquebuses. We were lodged there and much honour done us, and in the morning one

<sup>1</sup> The substance of what follows is taken from the letters of Camerino and of Pier Francesco Riccio; published, some by Signor Guasti (*Giornale Storico degli Archivi Toscani*, vol. II) and some by Signor Ferrai (*Lorenzino de' Medici*).

<sup>2</sup> The villa near Florence where both Cosimo and his father spent part of their childhood.

<sup>3</sup> The reader will notice that Lorenzo was called indifferently either Lorenzo or by the diminutive, Lorenzino, and this applies to other names as on p. 24, where the same man is referred to both as Bossolo and Bossolino

was sent ahead to Faenza to hear if the roads were safe. They were so, and at Faenza, the Governor came to visit us and we then went towards Ravenna, escorted by ten horsemen, and the Governor came about a mile to meet us. We were lodged in the great Palazzo, lay for a day at Ravenna, and then, the weather being fair, took boat. The boat with our masters came to land at the port of Volano on the territory of the Duke of Ferrara, and ours went to Goro, distant 18 miles, nor did either know aught of the other,"

they having separated to evade the notice and escape the possible insolence of Spanish soldiers in those parts. Arrived at Goro, Betto (one of the servants):

rode post to find them (the masters) and having found them, ordered they should leave at once for fear of the said Duke. We mounted the post horses, the Signor Cosimo in front of Betto, Messer Lorenzo by himself and Messer Giuliano [who was not much older than Cosimo] in front of Pierino... one without a saddle, one without this thing and one without that. They came away without any hindrance, save for the padrone [Cosimo]; as I have heard, (there being much mud there) the mare fell in the mud, the bridle broke, and neither one nor the other turned a hair.

Meeting all together at Goro, the three *padroncini*, the two masters and the four servants (two on horseback and two on foot) went thus as far as le Fornaci:

The rest of us having gone by boat up the Po, we met all together thanks be to God, having had many fears, but deeming ourselves safe. In the morning we all went on by boat to Chioggia, where we arrived at the eighteenth hour, and likewise took boat again for Venice<sup>1</sup>.

Here Alamanno Salviati, brother of Maria, soon had the boys moved from the inn to his Palazzo until a suitable lodging had been found. They fixed on one in the Contrada of Sta. Maria Mater Domini in the house of the Cappelli; the very house where the too famous Bianca Cappello (one day to be a thorn in the flesh to Cosimo) afterwards spent her youth<sup>2</sup>.

"Here," says Camerino, "Sua Signoria sleeps in a room where there is a bed in which he sleeps; under the bed is a truckle bed, where

<sup>1</sup> Ferrai, *Lorenzino de' Medici*, p. 447.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 31.

sleep the tutor and I, and save for us there is none other in the room, and I attend to waiting on Sua Signoria and serve as taster, and keep him as neat and clean as possible....The Signor Cosimo wears a pair of red cloth hose and a jerkin of camlet, padded with thin cotton: his shirt is of red cloth, and I have fastened on the rosary Vostra Signoria sent, and the Grosso of S. Ludovico and the other relic, and he hath a doublet of cloth, plain from the breast downwards. When he goes abroad, he wears the Ferrarese dress, when he goes in a gondola, at times this dress, and at times the *cappa* (or short cloak). Messer Lorenzo and Messer Giuliano," goes on Camerino in the same breath, "sleep in another room, and we all live so peaceably together that it is not to be believed, and so shall try to continue. The children's linen we send to be washed by a Florentine woman who dwells with Messer Tommaso where dwells Messer Alamanno, and we send it to her because there is none who washes well nor speedily and she does it out of courtesy<sup>1</sup>."

And, having given Maria all the little details which he knew she would like to hear, Camerino ends by telling of Cosimo's behaviour on learning the death of his father:

Before the Signor Cosimo knew of the Signore's death, he was only so-so, neither cheerful nor in good humour. When he learnt it, I know not well what he said, for he was told it when he and his tutor were alone in the room, but from what the tutor hath said, he did not weep much, but told him: "In truth I had guessed it," and was vexed in spirit.

Maria Salviati had every intention of furthering her boy's interests in a general way during his stay in  
1527 Venice, and it was by her express order that Cosimo had the privilege of a room more or less to himself. But distinctions of greater importance, which very probably roused the jealousy of Lorenzo (his elder by several years) fell to the seven-year-old Cosimo. He was, after all, the only son of Signor Giovanni de' Medici, late Captain-General of the Republic and still a glorious memory to the Signory of Venice, and Maria intended him to be known as such.

First of all, his uncle Alamanno was careful to present

<sup>1</sup> Ferrai, *op. cit.* p. 446.

his nephew to the Doge, Andrea Gritti, on whom he made an excellent impression:

"He went the first thing," reports Camerino, "to visit the Doge, and then the legate of Nostro Signore (the Pope) who looked on him most kindly, and that evening sent him the gift of a roebuck, offering him his house and all he had; then he went to the ambassadors of France and England, everyone showing himself friendly<sup>1</sup>." "We continue," says Riccio, writing some weeks later, "to visit some of the nobles, and your only son daily grows in favour with all. We did reverence to the legate of Nostro Signore, a man as well affected as any I have seen; he was all caresses and promises to Cosimo, and showed him particular affection for the friendship he had for his father of blessed memory.... Venetiis, die 23 Jan. 1526." (s.f.)<sup>2</sup>.

Thus officially recognised, Cosimo could take part in all festivities, sure of courtesy and hospitality. Nor were special attentions lacking. On the Thursday before Ash-Wednesday, Riccio wrote:

As the Serenissimo (*i.e.* the Doge) was keeping holiday, I wishing Cosimo to see the fun, we went to the palace, Cosimo, Lorenzo and Juliano (*sic*), where we found met together all the ambassadors and officers and gentlemen, and we, as always, were let pass without hindrance. And Cosimo was taken by one of the aforesaid gentlemen, who kept him at his side all day, holding him by the hand; and when it behoved them go from one room to the other, the Serenissimo, seeing Cosimo, recognised him and called him to him in the presence of all, kissing him and showing him lively affection<sup>3</sup>.

"I assure you," writes Riccio again, "that your only son does very well... and we are kindly received by all, and I promise you your son could not be better received than he is by great and small. And what affection and favour hath been shown him by the Magnifico Messer Marco Foschari (*sic*) (who was ambassador to Nostro Signore when Vostra Signoria was in Rome) I will not say, for 'twere superfluous; enough, if he were his son, his affection and kindliness and respect could not be greater. Moreover, three of his children adore him and can never have enough of seeing him and caressing him... And in truth never was seen such a gracious sight as your only son appears to all, and moreover wise and prudent and prompt in his answers<sup>4</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> Ferrai, *op. cit.* p. 32, note.

<sup>2</sup> Firenze, *Archivio di Stato*, Mediceo: Carteggio di Maria Salviati.

<sup>3</sup> Ferrai, *op. cit.* p. 33, note.

<sup>4</sup> C. Guasti, *op. cit.* p. 44.

Marin Sanudo, too, reports in his *Diarii*:

This evening (January 8th) Marco Foscari gave a delightful banquet, in Court style, with silver plate, in honour of a son of the Signor Zanin de' Medici... and of a son of Domino Jacobo (*sic*) Salviati... there were ladies there with Ser Marco da Molin *procuratore* and other patricians; there was playing and singing and a comedy; in short it was a fine feast<sup>1</sup>.

Foscari soon after left Venice, as Riccio on January 15th wrote:

This Signory hath elected ambassador to this Republic (Florence) the Magnifico Messer Marco Foschari (*sic*) (who so caressed Cosimo and Lorenzo) and as soon as I heard it, straightway I took Cosimo to do him reverence and congratulate him<sup>2</sup>.

A little later (February 3rd) Sanudo has another entry referring to Cosimo:

"to-day," he notes, "there came to the Council a son of the Signor Zanin de' Medici of tender years... and sat on the benches near the Heads of the Council of Ten; and half-way through he went away<sup>3</sup>."

Riccio, with a little more detail, writes:

Augustino Fuscheri (Foscari) took Cosimo into the Council, and if Vostra Signoria had seen with what gravity Cosimo noted everything, and how he was admired by many, you would have had no little pleasure, for in truth he showed an excellent disposition and gave promise of greater hopes for him; God prosper him<sup>4</sup>!

The little boy dressed, we may be sure, in all his best, must have been a refreshing sight among the grave responsible patricians; none of them, however, more serious and intent than their small visitor, listening with all his ears to the still unfamiliar Venetian dialect.

Lest his Tuscan speech should be corrupted, Riccio zealously urged Cosimo to study his Petrarch:

"Do not think," he writes to Maria, "that your son will learn uncouth words or use them in any way; rather he will improve, for we are

<sup>1</sup> Ferrai, *op. cit.* p. 34, note.

<sup>2</sup> Firenze, *Arch. di Stato*, *Carteggio cit.*

<sup>3</sup> Ferrai, *op. cit.* p. 34, note.

<sup>4</sup> Ferrai, *Cosimo de' Medici, Duca di Firenze* (Bologna, 1882), p. 48, note.

striving to polish our speech with the help of our Petrarch over which we daily pore for no other reason<sup>1</sup>."

To a boy like Cosimo, Venice, indeed, was hardly the place for study; yet if this rather exiguous amount of work was all that Riccio exacted from his pupil, Cosimo's bright eyes and retentive memory were surely on the alert. To associate with such dignified patricians as the noblemen of Venice was no bad training for the future ruler of Tuscany, and with his quick Italian perceptions he would learn from them lessons in statesmanlike bearing more profitably than from books. The mere outward aspect of Venice too, with her glory of gleaming palaces and blue waters, her golden shrine of S. Mark and wealth of gorgeous mosaics, would be a revelation to the young Florentine who knew only the narrow sombre streets of his native town. As different were the soft rich colours of Bellini's and Titian's pictures from the grave tones and harsh outlines of Botticelli's and Benozzo's works. But Cosimo, if he noticed them at all, probably felt more interest in those at home in which sacred history was made exciting by the familiar presence of his own black-browed ancestors, now masquerading as adoring kings, now as youthful servants of Our Lady, or again appearing in quaint allegorical dress.

For the best part of a year Cosimo and his cousins lived in these gay surroundings, enjoying to the full their new experiences, though one of them at 1527 least was hardly pleasant for Cosimo, who narrowly escaped drowning. According to one of his old biographers, Aldo Manuzio, he was playing with other children by the canal near Casa Cappello when he slipped into the water and, as he could not swim, was in great danger. But his cousin, Luisa Appiani,

<sup>1</sup> Ferrai, *Lorenzino de' Medici*, p. 35, note.

standing by, caught him by the hair and so held him until a monk passing by pulled him out<sup>1</sup>. More graphically Scipione Ammirato relates:

His mother having gone to pay her devotions in the Church of San Giuliano, the boy, who was on the *Fondamenta*, had gone down some steps slippery with mud, having a cane in his hand wherewith he tried to reach the bottom of the canal. Leaning all his weight on the cane,...his feet slipped, so that he fell in.

His mother from the church steps saw him go under twice and was making despairing vows to the Madonna of the Annunziata in Florence, when a good brother of S. Giuliano plunged into the water and seizing Cosimo by his long hair ("ch' egli haveva assai bella") pulled him out<sup>2</sup>. The friar was not forgotten but, coming to Florence years afterwards with the intention of having a look at the Duke, approached just as he was mounting the steps of his palace. Before the friar could make himself known Cosimo turned round and, recognising him, asked if it were not he who had saved his life at Venice. For the Duke prided himself (and, if this be true, not without reason) on never forgetting a face. The friar, we are glad to learn, is said to have been rewarded with a bishopric.

Maria Salviati, as the above episode shows, had joined her son in Venice and with her came Maria Soderini, mother of Lorenzo and Giuliano. Both the Medici widows had judged it advisable to leave Florence, where the final restoration of popular government (consequent on Bourbon's approaching Rome) had caused tumults. Riccio had some anxious days before her arrival, while he, with Cosimo and Lorenzo, was away on a short visit to Padua and Vicenza, of which journey there is nothing of interest to relate. On May 1st he

<sup>1</sup> *Vita di Cosimo I de' Medici scritta da Aldo Manucci.* (Edition of 1823, p. 41.)

<sup>2</sup> Scipione Ammirato, *Opuscoli*, vol. III. p. 210.

says to Maria that though there had been letters almost every day from Venice:

"there was none who could tell us aright (*i.e.* of Maria's whereabouts); whence our trouble and surprise waxed greater; yet I have so striven that I have learnt Vostra Signoria had left Florence and gone towards Pistoia for your safety... Your son," he adds, "does admirably and is well content, for every day these *monsignori* caress him more... and the air could not be more inspiring (*jocondo*) and kindly; let us then pray God he may remove this flame from Italy<sup>1</sup>."

The prayer was by no means answered, but Cosimo and his mother lived safe and unharmed at Venice while the horrors of the sack of Rome made not Italy alone but all Europe shudder, and while the Florentine Republic was arming for her death grapple.

Few documents remain to give us word of the doings of Cosimo or his mother in the year 1528, nor is it known when they left Venice. During this year 1528 they had been joined by Cosimo's grandmother, Lucrezia Salviati, a stately, venerable old lady, and with her, so Varchi relates, they made a hurried retreat from Venice. Diplomatic relations between Rome and Venice were just then seriously strained, and these Medici in spite of family differences were closely connected with Clement VII:

"Perhaps," writes Signor Ferrai, "Duke Cosimo, telling Varchi many years after of this hasty return which seemed more like a flight, pictured himself a child again in a six-oared boat enjoying the gay companionship of his cousins and masters. But there is no proof that the two families went with Madonna Lucrezia as far as Cesena. Indeed, soon afterwards we find the two widows (Maria Salviati and Maria Soderini) once more in their villas of il Trebbio and of Cafaggiuolo<sup>2</sup>."

This time however their stay was short, for the peace of Cambrai was signed and the troops enlisted

<sup>1</sup> *Archivio cit.*, *Carteggio cit.* and *Guasti*, *loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ferrai*, *op. cit.* p. 66.

for the overthrow of Florence were already on the march. Even before their descent, roving bands under Fabrizio Maramaldo and a certain captain named Ramazzotto were coming unpleasantly near these unprotected villas, occupying Firenzuola and Scarperia, sacking Garigliano, Barberino, and all the other castles and villas of the Mugello<sup>1</sup>. Once more then, the boys and the women left home, to seek refuge this time in Bologna. But, as a relief from the turbulent scenes which formed the background to Cosimo's boyhood and no doubt helped him to mature so young, comes a letter from Riccio to Maria (who was perhaps in Florence) written during this brief stay at il Trebbio:

Cosimo does very well and greets Vostra Signoria. He is keeping Lent gladly, for Bossolino brings him mushrooms<sup>2</sup> so often that he gets them morning and evening, both roast and boiled, and eats them for all the world like a dish of chickens; and in truth he is right for they are indeed good; Bossolo therefore deserveth commendation... dal Trebbio alli 18 di marzo 1528. (s.f.)<sup>3</sup>.

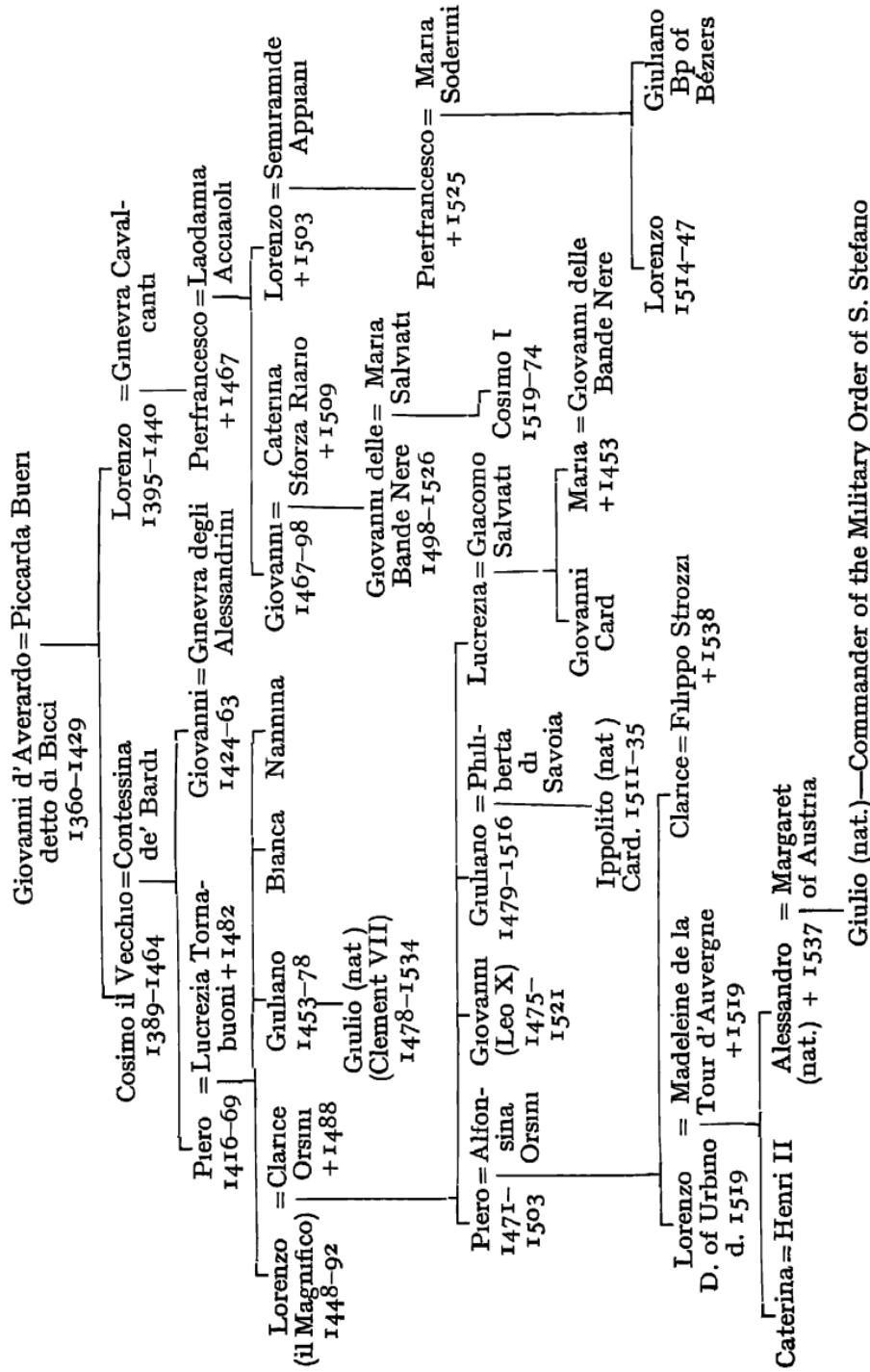
Reading this, one might forget that the war-trumpets, so soon to drive Cosimo away, had already sounded.

<sup>1</sup> Ferrai, *op. cit.* p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> A sort which is found in the spring.

<sup>3</sup> Arch and Carteggio *cit.*

TABLE SHOWING THE DESCENT OF COSIMO I



## CHAPTER II

VISITS TO BOLOGNA—LETTERS FROM GENOA—FLORENCE  
UNDER DUKE ALESSANDRO—JOURNEY TO NAPLES

COSIMO had had a taste of life at Venice, and had received even more than his due recognition. Flattery of every sort had been lavished on him. Now he was to mingle with the great of the earth indeed, among whom the “son of Zanin de’ Medici” might reasonably be held of small account. And he was to see that pleasant town Bologna, described by a contemporary as almost “a model of Venice,” thanks to the courteous manners there prevalent, the beauty of the women and the pleasant liberty of social intercourse:

“It is so full of folk,” goes on our authority, “that it is a marvel; there is also a goodly number of shops, the gentlemen moreover are most magnificent and courtly, fine and stately personages, wearing nought but satin or velvet. . . . Of the women I will not speak; I cannot describe their grace, their beauty and gentleness which make them notable. Boccaccio was indeed right when he cried: ‘Oh singular sweetness of the Bolognese!’ (O singolar dolcezza del sangue bolognese); think you how pleasant ‘twere to see them at their doors after supper! . . . . ’Tis the custom that every man may doff his cap and salute them, whereat they courteously salute him in turn. At the twenty-second hour (or two hours before sunset) we go to the piazza, and there hear a blare of trumpets . . . after which there come seven men with four trombones and three cornets, and in marvellous fashion they there play three or four motets or madrigals of infinite sweetness<sup>1</sup>. ”

It was thus in pleasant surroundings that Cosimo first saw papal and imperial magnificence solemnly displayed for the ceremony of Charles V’s coronation. Unconscious of the tragedy which underlay this meeting of Pope and Emperor, the boy would have no eyes but for its outward splendour. In

<sup>1</sup> Ferrai, *op. cit.* p. 69. *Lettera di m. Francesco Sansovino.*



Giovanni Vasari

CLEMENT VII AND CHARLES V



the midst of sixteen Cardinals, outvying the Emperor in the glory of their vivid robes, Charles proceeded to the great church of San Petronio:

Before him went Bonifazio Paleologo bearing the imperial sceptre; Duke Philip of Bavaria, to whom was entrusted the golden orb, the Duke of Urbino and Duke Carlo III il Buono of Savoy. The Spanish grandees and the other Italian princes followed the Emperor<sup>1</sup>.

But the historian Varchi was of opinion that this coronation "whereof so much has been written both in the Latin and the Tuscan tongue"<sup>2</sup> was more magnificent in its description than as it appeared to him at the time; the underlying hollowness of the apparent reconciliation perhaps subconsciously affected the minds of those present. For, though Clement and Charles were both of them adepts in dissimulation, even their self-control must have been heavily taxed at this meeting. The Emperor's heavy, impassive features indeed habitually masked his emotions, but the keen-faced Pope must have had a harder task not to betray himself. How could he so soon wipe out the memories of the sack of Rome, his terrors, the indignity of his flight for refuge to Sant' Angelo, the stinging ignominy that had been his lot when Rome was a prey to the Lutheran devils? Canossa, in the person at least of the Pope, was almost avenged at Bologna. And all the while Italy suffered, Italy was the victim. For who was in truth to profit by the surrender of Florence, had things turned out as Charles desired? Not the Medici, as Clement fondly hoped, but Spain. The Spanish garrison to be installed there would be another rivet in the chain that Charles was forging for the whole peninsula; the Duke of Florence, his future son-in-law, would also be his vassal and might become his puppet. Something of this Clement no doubt suspected,—a vague

<sup>1</sup> Ferrai, *op. cit.* p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> B. Varchi, *Storia fiorentina* (Milan, 1803), vol. iv. p. 38.

uneasiness filled him. He was seen to sigh during the coronation ceremony when he thought he could do so unobserved, and to the Bishop of Tarbes he had confided—"I see well that I am being deceived, but I must needs act as if I knew it not<sup>1</sup>." Charles himself was equally doubtful of Clement's good faith, and so, under the dreariest auspices, their compact was made. The country was laid waste, the people were starving, the children crying from hunger in the streets of Pavia. Only in Bologna there was outward mirth and rejoicing over the hollow peace, the price of which was to be the fall of Florence. All that concerns Cosimo, however, is to note that he here renewed acquaintance (perhaps on more equal ground than in Rome) with his two cousins of the elder branch of Medici. Alessandro, soon to be son-in-law to Charles V and Duke of Florence, was intent on trying, by the splendour of his dress, to compensate for his few personal charms, while young Ippolito, the reluctant Cardinal, may have seized the opportunity of the jousts and tournaments at Court to show himself in the military dress so much more to his liking than the long robes to which he was now condemned. Ammirato however suggests that the Cardinal still looked on Cosimo as a very youthful kinsman; seeing his hair long, Ippolito sent for scissors and with his own hands cut short the luxuriant crop which we know Cosimo possessed, saying it was no longer the time to wear his hair long (*non era più tempo da usare la zazzera*)<sup>2</sup>.

Maria Salviati had but come to Bologna as it were under compulsion, to escape danger, and had no intention that her son in his early years should court the Emperor. Yet, for all that, although an unimportant and unconsidered figure, Cosimo (destined for a higher

<sup>1</sup> G. de Leva, *Storia documentata di Carlo V in Italia*, vol. II. p. 604 (Venice, 1863-7).

<sup>2</sup> Ammirato, *op. cit.* p. 214.

part than he dreamed of) no doubt in after years remembered how he had seen Emperor and Pope busied, amid the festivities of Bologna, in sealing the fate of Italy; Clement intent on revenging the insult done him by his native town, and Charles content to aid him if, by this means, he could secure peace at least in one quarter.

Cosimo was soon to renew his acquaintance with Bologna and be brought more definitely to the notice of Charles V. He was now taken by his mother to Rome<sup>1</sup>, where Maria tried to renew the good impression made on the Pope some years before by the baby Cosimo. This time, however, Clement observing him to be lively and forward beyond his years, began dimly to foresee a danger to Alessandro from a possible rival, so that caresses were probably bestowed less freely than before. Cosimo's biographers tell, with certain variations, a story which very probably had its origin during this stay in Rome, although Ammirato appears to ante-date it and Manuzio refers the scene of it to Florence. It has its interest, as illustrating the belief in a certain precocious reticence and accuracy in one who afterwards developed those qualities almost to excess. He was barely seven, says Ammirato<sup>2</sup>, when, penetrating one day to the Pope's private apartments, he heard some intimate talk as to Clement's relations with Charles. On his return home, his mother asked him where he had been, on which he repeated what he had heard, with astonishing accuracy. But as two gentlemen were with his mother, she frowned at him and told him not to chatter, nor did he ever forget the lesson. Aldo Manuzio gives as a variant the tale that Cosimo overheard grave matters discussed in Florence by the Cardinal of Cortona, who, observing the boy when too late, called him and bade him tell no one what he had heard. So strictly did Cosimo keep his promise that

<sup>1</sup> Ferrai, *op. cit.* p. 77.

<sup>2</sup> Ammirato, *op. cit.* p. 208.

not even his mother could extract any information from him on the point, though she went so far as to box his ears. Ammirato's version, however, is on the whole the more probable of the two, if only because there was more intimacy on Cosimo's part with Clement VII than with the Cardinal of Cortona during the rule of the latter in Florence.

On their return to Florence after the visit to Rome, Cosimo and his mother lived chiefly at the villa of il Trebbio, until the occasion of his second stay at Bologna of which an account must now be given.

In the December of 1532 Cosimo, by this time a tall strong boy of thirteen, again set off on the familiar road that led over the Apennines. He was no longer in the company of his mother or of any womenfolk, but riding with his cousin Alessandro, the new-made Duke of Florence. Their way did not take them direct to Bologna, but westwards to meet the Emperor at Mantua. There is a brief note of Riccio's telling us of their arrival. The faithful tutor, in the months of absence which seemed so long to Maria, at least conscientiously kept her informed of all Cosimo's doings:

...I wrote to Vostra Signoria of the arrival at Mantua of the Signor your son with the Illustrissimo Signor Duca and of their good health.  
.... And now we momently await the departure of the Cesarea Maestà<sup>1</sup>, with whom I judge our Illmo. Duca will ride towards Bologna, and the Signor your son shortly after<sup>2</sup>.

At Bologna Cosimo was to be in charge of his tutor while his grandfather, Jacopo Salviati, would also have an eye to him and, together with Alessandro, further his interests both with Pope and Emperor. Young as he was, projects for his marriage were already on foot,

<sup>1</sup> Charles V.

<sup>2</sup> For most of the letters that follow, *vide* C. Guasti, in the article referred to above.

and most of the letters of this date show Maria Salviati's solicitude that Cosimo and his tutor should be diligent in the negotiation of it. As, in spite of all, the scheme came to nothing, the ostensible object of the stay at Bologna failed, yet we may conjecture that this early sharpening of Cosimo's wits, this precocious essay in diplomacy, was not without its fruit before many years had passed.

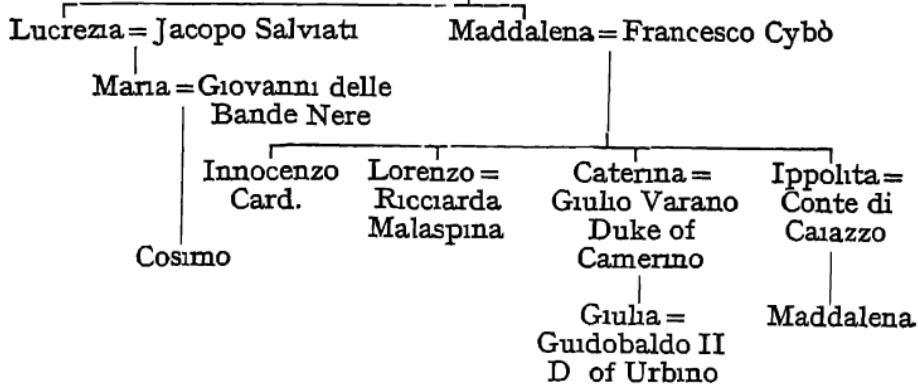
From the first, there were difficulties in the way. Not only was it a question of stimulating the interests of various more or less indifferent people, but Cosimo had already a rival in the person of his cousin Lorenzo, predisposed, from the time of their stay in Venice, to envy of his junior. This time indeed, Cosimo himself failed of gaining his end, but the rebuff was far less serious to him at his early age, than to Lorenzo, who had possibly built on the prospect of being saved from his financial complications by a successful marriage. Maria, however, dreaded his rivalry and was, from the start, uneasy about the whole affair. Very early she sent Riccio minute advice as to the course she judged it wise to take:

"As to your first letter, I was glad to hear that Cosimo did well.... But further, it no wise satisfies me, nor in any way pleases me, thus to be guided in this affair of ours by my father. Rather, to dispose of it more speedily, meseemeth (as you may see by a letter of mine to Cosimo if he have not failed to get it) it were better, he being there himself, not to expect of my father or of others that they should act for him, but rather that he should act for himself, and be ready to ask for what he wishes. And this the sooner the better, for methinks that ere long Messer Lorenzo de' Medici will be there, who will not fail to cause trouble. But let him do his part and I will not fail in what is due from me. This I would have you bear in mind, that wherein he fails,...you make good. And let him take heart to ask himself for some benefit from Nostro Signore, for I am persuaded of this, that if he does it not, and if he is so simple as to wait on Monsignor de' Medici and the Excellentia del Duca, that will happen to him which happened to his father,"—meaning, that he would get nothing.

But before the story of Cosimo's winter at Bologna is continued we may pause to enquire who was his proposed bride. Her name is never mentioned throughout the correspondence, and this has led to an error, by which she was thought to be Giulia Varano, heiress of the Duke of Camerino, afterwards married to Guidobaldo II, Duke of Urbino. Later researches, however, seem to establish her identity as Maddalena Cybò, niece of Cardinal Innocenzo Cybò, a distant cousin of Cosimo<sup>1</sup>. Memoirs of the Cybò family give an account of Maddalena's forcible abduction by her kinsman and suggest more sincerity in Clement VII's readiness to have given her to Cosimo than seems to have been felt by Maria, who was not without experience of papal vacillation, and possibly in this instance was misled by the past<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>

Lorenzo il Magnifico



<sup>2</sup> B. Feliciangeli, *Notizie e Documenti sulla vita di Caterina Cibo-Varano* (Camerino, 1891). Signor Feliciangeli corrects the mistake made by Guasti, and, following him, by Signor Ferrai, pointing out (pp. 120, 121), that the sister of Cardinal Cybò's referred to in Maria's letters as the *contessa* and mother of Cosimo's proposed bride, cannot well be Caterina Cybò, as she was Duchessa and always so styled. Instead, we may well take her to be Cardinal Innocenzo's second sister, Ippolita, who was in fact Contessa di Caiazzo, widow of Roberto Sanseverino. Dr. Staffetti moreover found in the archives of Massa a letter which seems to clinch the matter. Cardinal Ippolito de' Medici writing to Innocenzo Cybò says: "Nostro Signore desidera che la figlia del Conte di Caiazzo, bona memoria, si mariti a Cosimo figlio del S. Giovanni de' Medici." (Luigi Staffetti, *Il Cardinale Innocenzo Cybò*, Firenze, 1894, p. 116.)

With this marriage negotiation, then, as the serious business of the stay at Bologna, Cosimo none the less found plenty of amusement for the winter months, even though he had to devote more time than he wished to letter-writing. He began the task with commendable promptness, and though perhaps his first letter is merely formal, for the most part even this early correspondence of Cosimo's seems to show some individuality:

"Magnifica Madonna, Madre Osservandissima," he begins on their arrival at Bologna, "We have at this hour reached Bologna in safety, thanks to our Lord God; where I found two letters of yours of the same tenour. I have read them and attended diligently to all that is for my benefit and I will do what is expected of me as soon as may be, we having to-day left the Emperor at Coreggio (*sic*).... However, with the Illustrissimo Signor mio Duca I have straightway kissed his Holiness' feet; and likewise in the name of Vostra Signoria. His Holiness caressed me much, and more I will not say, for we are but now emptying our saddle-bags. I commend myself to Vostra Signoria, whom may God preserve to me. Di Bologna li X. di Xbre 153ij.

di V. S. obb. figlo (*sic*)

COSIMO MEDICI<sup>1</sup>.

Next day, too, perhaps not without a pleasant sense of his importance, Cosimo sent a second most serious letter:

...I wrote yester evening...as soon as I had dismounted, giving news of my well-being. Nor could I say more, for I had done nought but kiss his Holiness' feet, and there I saw the Signor your father, both one and the other very well disposed. This morning I dined with Sua Signoria, who caressed me in fatherly fashion. And although late yester evening the aforesaid Signor your father, I talking to him of our affair, said to me he knew not if it were well to lay it before Sua Beatitudine, and for all that this morning, when I revealed the desire of Vostra Signoria and of myself,...he replied in almost the same words, yet none the less when he had had the summary of our affair and the report of the Arte della Seta, I being instant with him that he should obtain some decision from his Holiness, that I

<sup>1</sup> Firenze, *Archivio di Stato*, Mediceo · Carteggio di Maria Salviati.

might straightway send word thereof to you, he said that he would first read all again with diligence, and that I should return to him again, it being impossible that he should not do all for me in his power, for that he held me dear...<sup>1</sup>.

There was, as this letter shows, a second subject for negotiation between Cosimo and the Pope. A lawsuit was pending in which Cosimo was eventually to gain another advantage over his cousins of the Pierfrancesco line, so that the presence of Lorenzo at Bologna was doubly distasteful to Maria. Riccio, however, tried to console her by observing "winds do little harm to a deep-rooted oak," and by insisting on the friendliness shown to Cosimo by all his influential kinsmen.

But Cosimo's attention was likely to be distracted from so dull a thing as letter-writing. "The Spanish army," writes Riccio, soon after their arrival, "hath been passing by all day," and though it was in pitiless rain that they defiled through the streets, yet the sight must have been a thrilling one to his charge. Moreover, once the Emperor was duly, if unenthusiastically, welcomed, sumptuous banquets and public rejoicings began:

"These Bolognese Signori," says a contemporary letter, "have made ready for tourneys in the street of San Donà, before the house of the Signora Camilla Palavisina (*sic*) where they are wont to tilt at the ring and joust.... Many masks there are and many fine horses. The Duke Alessandro, the Prince of Sulmona, the Grand Equerry of the Maestà Cesarea, were clad parti-wise in gold brocade of purple and turkis blue<sup>2</sup>,"

and in all the merry-making Cosimo's lord Duke was ever one of the most resplendent and the most fêted.

Maria heard, not without uneasiness, of all the gaiety, fearing that the serious business of Cosimo's visit might be neglected and, at a distance as she was, passed many a troubled hour. In most of her letters at this time a note of anxiety is audible. Already in December she

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. and Carteggio cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Ferrai, *op. cit.* p. 135, note.

urges Riccio not to fail in sending news of Cosimo; again, early in January, she bids him remember to be more diligent in writing oftener, for two days have passed and she has had no news of Cosimo. He must never fail in this diligence, she says once more, even if he writes for nothing save to give her news of Cosimo. One seems to detect a fear lest she should weary her son with her care and admonitions, for often there will be a message in the letters to Riccio which she thinks will interest the boy and show him that she shares in his pleasures:

"Do not fail," she writes on December 26th, "to give me news of Cosimo and the others more often than you do.... And you can tell Cosimo that la Mosca is well and fit but as yet she has had no litter of puppies."

Maria evidently wished Cosimo to make a good figure among the other youths and there is more than one reference to clothes needed for him:

The cloth that you desire for Cosimo is being sent and is five *braccia* long; methinks it will make a large enough cloak. And then I judge there may be some over to make a pair of hose.

Shortly after this letter Riccio, anxious no doubt to please his young master, writes on Jan. 4th, 1533:

".... For all that the Signor your son lacks nothing that is needful, thanks to his Excellency, yet for every reason it were well that Vostra Signoria should send him some Scudi, for he too hath certain harmless desires. He also wishes for a dozen handkerchiefs, worked in black or otherwise, provided they are fine, for those his lady hath are very fine.... I assure Vostra Signoria that he will never be little; this very morning he essayed to make himself out taller than Toso, who is growing in breadth.... Methinks," adds Riccio with the vivid touch we so often find in these old letters, "that we shall be seeing Vostra Signoria again at cherry time, but whether the cherries will yet be red I know not...<sup>1</sup>."

Whether the casual mention of "a lady" disturbed Maria we do not know, but something apparently made

<sup>1</sup> Guasti, *op. cit.* p. 60.

her uneasy on receiving this letter and led her to write one to which Cosimo thus replied on January 11th, 1533:

.... If Vostra Signoria takes great pleasure in hearing how well I do, I too can have no greater content than when I hear the same of you, as I learn by your letter of the VII. of the present month, which thing God grant may continue, as is the common desire.... The handkerchiefs will be acceptable.

So much for the formal preamble. He then hastily goes on:

I will not otherwise answer a certain portion of your letter, judging that Vostra Signoria wished to jest somewhat with me, imagining me to be in your presence. For, an if I thought you spoke seriously, I would first, as an obedient son, willingly accept a maternal reproof, and would continue as you directed. And secondly I would show that, if I did but amuse myself, it was at a season ill suited for affairs, and done in such wise as there is no danger. Vostra Signoria, then, may be of good courage, and pray God that our Illustrissimo Duca be favoured by heaven, for his Excellency could not be more gracious to me, God grant him life and happiness. Nor let Vostra Signoria think it a grave thing if I should send to ask for money, and on this I will say no more....

di V. S. obb. figlio, COSIMO DE' MEDICI,

di Bologna XI. Gen: 1532 (s.f.)<sup>1</sup>.

The time so ill-suited for affairs was of course carnival, but Cosimo, after this admonition, must have torn himself for a while at least from his amusements, as on January 16th he writes the following business-like letter:

" ....I often bring myself to his Holiness' recollection, and press Messer Jacopo [his grandfather] when opportunity serves, and God knows if he can do aught. This morning I had him alone and answered him precisely in these words: 'Signor mio Jacopo, I am your grandson; there is no one for me (on my side): opportunity is escaping us; death spoils many fine plans. Well now, I would that the extraordinary favour his Holiness wishes to do me (as you once told me) I would, I say, that it were ordinary, and that it should

<sup>1</sup> Firenze, Arch. cit., loc. cit.

come about in my lifetime.' He answered me kindly, as is his wont, saying that they were chiefly pondering over this wife and that the Contessa held her head high. He promised me his own favour and help.... Whence I judge," concludes the young diplomatist, "that Vostra Signoria had best write to the reverendissimo your brother [Cardinal Salviati] in Rome as to this matter, since I set great store by him...di bologna (*sic*).

•  
li 16. gennaio MDXXXij. figlolo (*sic*) obb.

COSIMO DE' MEDICI<sup>1</sup>.

Meanwhile, before getting his answer, Maria had written to Riccio:

Messer Pierfrancesco,...I shall ever be glad that Cosimo should amuse himself fittingly, and in this I commend him to you, and I would he should do himself honour and I will never fall short of what I can do. Meanwhile, I will send...50 ducats...Di Firenze, all Xij di zennaio 1532 (s.f.).

Riccio, the following day, reported the arrival of the handkerchiefs: "the handkerchiefs pleased the Signor your son who is well, and this morning they are gone to the chase, careless of the cold."

Amusements, indeed, now followed thick and fast, Riccio writing first of one then of another thing wanted by Cosimo; balls for tennis, a game-pouch for hawking ("since these fat fellows here will not make them"). Another day we learn "the Duke and the Signor your son are excellently well (thanks be to God); they are busied with maskings and jousts and hunting parties." Or again "the masks are doubling in numbers, so much so that even Riccio longs for one, but thinks he had best forego his desire." Cosimo, for his part, perhaps in his anxiety to have his wants satisfied, took the trouble to write his mother a serious letter on the very day when Riccio was longing to join in the fun of carnival:

"Since il nostro Riccio hath written three evenings following save one and hath taken the letters to Guiduccio, I will say nought

<sup>1</sup> Guasti, *op. cit.* p. 62

else in this, for by these and by the letter I send herewith of the Illustrissimo Jacopo your father you will have learnt the substance of what is doing at present. If I write not so often now, it is that none of the time is lost that I spend with our Illustrissimo Duca, which seemeth to me the important thing, as I have before pointed out. And I see, read and direct Riccio in what he writes and this suffices.... I have great pleasure in learning of your good health by your letter of the 25th and mine is also good. Your words," adds Cosimo with rather doubtful veracity, "are my precepts and law. The palfrey," he concludes, with a sense of having done with dull matters, "is very well. Ghirlandino serves me every day for exercise, in which he hath no rival. Turchetto (another horse) is in the stable; when we come back we shall see if it hath benefited him.... See that you ever pray God for me.

di bologna, li 28 di gen<sup>o</sup>. MDXXXij.

buon figlio COSIMO DE' MEDICI<sup>1</sup>.

His zeal in letter-writing, however, must have flagged after this, for which perhaps carnival was responsible, as Riccio sends word:

the Signor your son is well disposed, and as you must know his head hath pained him somewhat, but he is not otherwise affected.....

But this excuse would not serve Cosimo long, and ten days later Maria wrote, bidding Riccio:

tell Cosimo that I am well pleased he should make merry this carnival time, and at all other times, but let him remember, when these days are past, to write to me now and again, telling me how he does; assuring him that I ever have the greatest delight on seeing word from him in his own hand.

She then speaks of her anxiety lest his interests were not being properly furthered, and her uneasiness at no letters having been received by Cardinal Cybò in Florence either from the Pope or Cardinal de' Medici:

"It may be," she says, "that it comes from Cosmo (*sic*) being with whom he is (*i.e.* Alessandro), for the Cardinal (Ippolito) was fain to have him, but methought 'twas all one with whom he was, and he having his goods there, meseemed more to the purpose he should

<sup>1</sup> Guasti, *op. cit.* p. 306.

stay with whom he is. But since there hath ever been discord between them and ever will be, methinks it is for this that the Reverendissimo Medici will not take pains—not indeed to do an ill turn to Cosmo, but to another. Therefore meseemeth that you should seek out Sua Signoria Reverendissima on my behalf and tell him that if Sua R<sup>a</sup> S<sup>a</sup> be not content with this marriage, neither do I desire it should come about,..for I desire the matter to be resolved on promptly, whether yes or no, for I am resolved Cosimo shall not take a wife if not from the hand of Sua Rev<sup>a</sup> Signoria and of the Excellentia del Duca, and of Nostro Signore...."

Again she says:

Messer Antonio Guiducci tells me that the Cardinal de' Medici is not suited to guide this business....

Yet, uneasy perhaps at having said so much, she ends:  
Bid Cosimo court the aforesaid Monsignor Medici, for if he doth the contrary, one day it might go ill with him<sup>1</sup>.

To this Riccio is able to reply:

Here is the letter we desired, from the Reverendissimo and Illustrissimo Medici in the name of Sua Beatitudine, with the lines added in Sua Rev<sup>a</sup> Signoria's own hand. I will say nought of the kindly promises of Sua Rev<sup>a</sup> Signoria to the Signor your son. As far as his authority goes, he will never fail.... I was this morning with the Signor your father who says all is as it seems. Having thus so many to act for us, I shall willingly leave Bologna.... The Emperor, as I learn from a good source, will depart on Friday, and I think our Illustrissimo Duca will linger here th'ree days after his majesty ...di Bologna, the first morning of Lent.

So far so good, but Maria's misgivings after all did not deceive her, and Riccio, in his satisfaction over the many patrons of his young master, perhaps forgot the possibility of his falling between two stools. From Cosimo himself we find no more letters whilst he was at Bologna, but his messages, desiring that fowling-nets and other preparations for sport should be set in order against his return, probably kept his mother rather joyfully busied in his behalf.

<sup>1</sup> Guasti, *op. cit.* p. 308.

Return now was in sight, for at the end of February Charles V left Bologna and in his train went Cosimo and his cousin. So far there is no word of how Charles dealt with the lad destined afterwards to play the first part among Italian rulers. Up to this date Maria Salviati's interests and that of her kinsmen lay chiefly with the Pope, and Cosimo no doubt was merely formally presented to an indifferent Emperor by his cousin the Duke.

In the spring weather they now went northwards,  
1533 Riccio still sending frequent messages from  
 Cosimo to have all in order when he reached home:

"I forgot to tell Vostra Signoria that besides the net for taking fishes, that you should also have the trees pruned and all made ready for fowling, and for snaring birds both at Castello and at la Topaia.... I am sending back the Signore's bed, both because we cannot make use of it on the journey...and because in truth there is no great need of it, since the first care of the servants sent on ahead is the comfort of the aforesaid Signor your son.... Such is the memory of those blessed bones that rest at Mantua<sup>1</sup> and the will of our most excellent Duke"—so Riccio ends with something of an anticlimax. "We left Bologna," he reported from Parma (March 7th), "on Tuesday, as I wrote to Vostra Signoria, and yesterday arrived at Parma from Correggio, both our Ill<sup>mo</sup> Duca and the Signor your son being excellently well. Here they will stay I think two or three days as they are inclined, and then they will ride toward Milan, for that the Emperor wisheth to see that most spacious city. And there we shall stay until so much time hath passed that there is fitting opportunity for embarking; so that I judge it will be a matter of a full month and haply part of the next<sup>2</sup>."

Nor was he very far wrong, for by March 27th they had got no farther than Genoa, having reached Milan on March 15th. Cosimo wrote a brief note from Piacenza and more at length from Vigevano, but the *amplissima città* of Milan left no recorded impression on his mind,

<sup>1</sup> Referring to Giovanni delle Bande Nere.

<sup>2</sup> Guasti, *op. cit.* p. 314.

even though Francesco Sforza, the nominal Duke, was his distant kinsman. The letters lack their usual spirit and were, one fears, unwillingly written at Riccio's urgent entreaty:

I wrote to Vostra Signoria from Vigevano of my well-being. In this I have nought to say save the same thing, namely that I (thanks to our Lord God) could not be better and desire to hear from you, and it is many days that I have no news of you save that given me by Pandolpho Pucci. When I have letters it will give me pleasure. On the 22nd we arrived at Alessandria, where haply we shall hear what hath been deliberated on as to our journey, but it seems his Majesty is none the less in haste to embark, and 'tis said he desires to keep Easter at Barcelona. Please God he have a prosperous voyage to our general content. I will make an end...<sup>1</sup>.

But, arrived at Genoa, things went better, and the sight of that glorious sea, the bustle of the port, the swelling sails of the ships and galleons, all combined to excite Cosimo:

"In truth," writes Riccio, "the Signor your son could not do better than he does at this kindly season, and at Genoa moreover (justly called the paradise of Italy) where the country-side for various reasons is to his liking. But above all, as Vostra Signoria may guess, the sea delighteth him, so that idleness hath no place with him (*l' ocio non albergha cò' lui*). We reached here the 27th, and his Majesty made his entry next day with the greatest pomp and concourse of all the folk in this populous region. But what was most pleasing both to see and to hear [Riccio, like his modern compatriots, plainly loved noise] was the multitude of galleys gaily decked and of ships well furnished with artillery, giving great tokens of rejoicing at his entry, so much so that verily sky and earth and sea seemed for a moment all a-tremble. His Majesty was lodged in the house of the Prince Andrea D'Oria, where I should judge he will keep Easter, for all there is a rumour that he desireth to keep it at Barcelona. However this may be, we at least shall soon return, but we must lose no time in eating artichokes and almonds and sea fennel (*bacighi*), for at Florence we shall find them unripe, and here they are in perfection, with so many roses and flowers that Madonna Catherina<sup>2</sup> (*sic*) would be proud of them, and both young and old carry them and in such big posies that they are more like bundles<sup>3</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> Guasti, *loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Presumably Caterina de' Medici.

<sup>3</sup> Guasti, *op. cit.* p 318.

To this Cosimo added a short note of no special interest, as if nothing could be got out of him while his head was full of the Emperor's setting sail and all the preparations consequent on it. Riccio, a week later, reported to Maria that "riding and change of places have made him fatter," and a certain Giovan Battista Sighizo, who signs himself Maestro di Casa, gave her further details, advising her of Cosimo's well-being:

"The Signor Cosimo, my second patron," he says, "is daily growing and is by now a man and troubles his head little about returning home, so much it pleases him to...go pleasureing on the sea, now to one place, now to another, and though by nature he was ever noble and gallant, he hath gained so much that all marvel at it, and there is none who doth not serve him well.... (5 April, 1533)<sup>1</sup>."

One more letter came to Maria from Cosimo before his return which fully bears out Giovan Battista's assertion that he was by now a man:

I have yours of the 28th of March, which came post by Gian Giordano, and have read it more than once, it being important to my interests. But since I desire so to act that I can be blamed by none, and since our return is at hand (for yesterday his Majesty set sail) I would not come to a decision on the road, but rather do what is fitting in such a matter, ever with an eye to the wishes of Nostro Signore and our other lords and elders, whose zeal I cannot think will have grown cold in this brief absence. And therefore I will say no more, for we will scan the matter more closely, face to face, and will then write with due reflection if it be necessary for the attaining of my end, to the satisfaction of the Excellentissimo Duca our Patron, who does well and I also, and now with me commends himself to Vostra Signoria.

In any case, let Vostra Signoria remit me twenty-five Ducats in Pisa, and advise me where I shall find them...di Genova, li 9. di Aprile, 1533<sup>2</sup>.

The journey to Bologna had done its work, and Cosimo was returning home a prudent determined youth, fully alive to his own interests and little thought-

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. cit., Carteggio cit.*

<sup>2</sup> *Idem.*

ful for others. Three years, of which we have scanty records, were now to pass, spent partly in Florence at the court of Duke Alessandro, and partly at the villa of il Trebbio where hunting and hawking pleasantly filled the time.

\* Yet, even in these more retired years, Cosimo did not live so secluded as has often been imagined. It has therefore seemed well to linger over the days of 1533 his boyhood, in order to correct the impression that he was kept in the background, until at Alessandro's death he burst a surprisingly unknown figure on the astonished gaze of Florence. On the contrary, it would be hard to say how he could have been more brought to notice when we reflect that, before he was fourteen, he had already been presented to the Signory of Venice, the Pope and the Emperor, made much of and caressed by those in power and conspicuously favoured by Alessandro who might reasonably be expected to play a great part in Cosimo's future. Ammirato says that, when Cosimo accompanied the Duke, or they went hunting, Alessandro desired that he should be treated as the first person in his company, and, contrary to the usage of his native place, he was called, after the foreign fashion, "Signore<sup>1</sup>." In fact, Cosimo was more often than not at the side of the Duke in these days, and must have taken part in the generous welcome given in Florence to Alessandro's very youthful bride, Margaret of Austria, who in April of 1533 spent a few days at Florence before going on to Naples, there to spend a year or two under the care of the Viceroy, Don Pedro de Toledo, and his wife.

Journeyings, too, were soon to begin once more. Cosimo would, Ammirato tells us, have gone to Marseilles with Alessandro on the occasion of the marriage of Catherine de Médicis, had not the Duke

<sup>1</sup> Ammirato, *Opuscoli*, vol. III. p. 216.

desired that this time he should stay at home. But his mother, reluctantly enough, accompanied the child on her long journey. This she had not consented to do without some pressure:

"Maria, figliuola carissima," wrote her father in remonstrance, "I have your two replies to letters of mine as to your going, with the Duchessa (Catherine) which in no wise satisfy me, nor do they seem to show that judgment which I was persuaded was yours, for it seemeth to me in no way reasonable that, when Nostro Signore hath besought you to go, you should be making conditions as to your going, and as to the expense you desire Nostro Signore should consent to, and meseemeth it is your Christian duty to go in whatsoever way you can, even if they gave you nought; and as to what they will give, leave it to them. Remember moreover, the more modestly you go, the less pomp and service you desire, the more will you be considered of all, for this suiteth with the rank you hold, and for all you will put your Cosimo to the expense of some five hundred ducats, yet you must reflect you could not spend them better.... And I marvel that since all Cosimo's welfare dependeth on Nostro Signore, you do not of yourself recognise what it behoveth you do. Do then what is desired of you as best you can, for this is what is needful for Cosimo<sup>1</sup>."

Jacopo knew the right chord to touch, and Maria duly went with the little bride to Marseilles, Cosimo only keeping them company as far as Livorno. He never saw his cousin again, and Catherine never showed him friendly feeling in after years in spite of the picture Ammirato draws of them as playmates.

Letters of December in this year show Cosimo to have been at Pisa with Alessandro, though on what errand we know not. Riccio's letters suggest that his pupil was rather beyond him:

"I have," he says, "entreathed your son on my bare knees and besought him and implored him (pregato e arcipregato) to content Vostra Signoria, and finally he must needs await the return of his Excellency, which will not seem long for the time goes in feasting.... We pass our time in the chase, in music and in letters blamelessly enough...."

<sup>1</sup> Firenze, *Arch. cit.*, Carteggio *cit.*

The festivities continued rather endlessly, and five days later (Dec. 28th) the tutor writes:

We have no news of Vostra Signoria, haply owing to these juncketings, and to the rain which, these last days, hath fallen so heavily that, for these two causes, every man has gladly stayed within doors. But now we await news of the condition of Vostra Signoria, which we greatly desire; and chiefly, for that I judge the feastings here must be fully over before we are once more Florentines. And the Signor your son does well, though he has been somewhat troubled by catarrh, but in nowise gravely and I write of it in order that Vostra Signoria be not disturbed, should word come of it (as is wont to happen) from another source. But be of good courage, for he had no need of lying in bed nor of rest, nor of the leech, nor of physic.... And I too for several days, have had my neck as big as the Giant's in the Piazza...<sup>1</sup>.

Maria, if not disturbed by this letter, may yet have been a trifle anxious on hearing, a few days later, news which seemed to suggest that either the air of Pisa or too much good cheer had unfavourably affected Cosimo, though Riccio makes light of it:

I wrote yesterday what was needful as to the Signor your son.... I have judged well to write a second time to advise you again that the slight pain in his leg is somewhat easier, both because he has been quiet and because we have taken measures to relieve it. Yet it seems as it were coming on again, and we shall relieve it as we are advised, and methinks 'twill pass in a few days.

A month or two later, however, Maria would be content, knowing that Cosimo was safe at il Trebbio, in excellent health and enjoying the good weather thanks to which:

Giovanni started divers hares skilfully enough, but so good were the hounds that three of them were killed and another that had hidden for fear in a secret lair was taken alive<sup>2</sup>.

But Cosimo had other amusements than those at the villa. His mother had husbanded her son's income well, paying off Giovanni's debts and mortgages, so that

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* Michelangiolo's David, then standing in Piazza della Signoria at Florence.

<sup>2</sup> *Arch. cit., Carteggio cit.*

Cosimo was now able to share in the gay doings of Alessandro's court. He expected advancement, as his mother hoped, from the King of France, though the boy himself would have preferred service under the Emperor, and it was thought that, as his father's son, he was sure of getting a company. Instead, however, there came a check to his ambitions from Clement VII. The Pope heard that many soldiers and captains once in Giovanni's service courted Cosimo: that he "went about clad like a cavalier and seeming such in his actions." Orders were therefore sent to Alessandro, to forbid his cousin's wearing this "foreign dress," in place of which he was to put on the long robe or *lucco* of a Florentine citizen. So much did Cosimo take this to heart that, says Ammirato, "during the ten days when he was forced to wear the *lucco* he hardly ever appeared in public," but passed great part of the time in solitude until Alessandro, at his earnest entreaty, allowed him to leave off the distasteful dress and excused himself as best he could by saying he had not himself wished to vex his cousin<sup>1</sup>. Alessandro in fact, when dealing with Maria Salviati or Cosimo, appears a more human figure than usual, and his behaviour in this connection endorses the statement made by Signor Ferrai that, "when not blinded by anger or passion, he could show himself kindly, benevolent and generous<sup>2</sup>." His undoubtedly sincere compassion for the poor would also commend him to Maria and, whether thanks to her fostering care, or whether Alessandro was to some degree thoughtful in his intercourse with the boy, in any case Cosimo seems to have taken little harm from his association with this rather notorious libertine.

<sup>1</sup> Aldo Manuzio in his biography refers this episode to an earlier date, but I have thought it probable that Ammirato is more correct in placing it a few years later, and have therefore followed his account. *Opuscoli*, vol. III. p. 216.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 163.

With Alessandro once more, and no longer even nominally in charge of a tutor, Cosimo was now to go to Naples and greet the Emperor on his triumphant return from Tunis. It was a critical moment for Alessandro, since he needed to gain the ear of Charles, before whom the Florentine exiles were prepared to lay their grievances against this new Duke and to demand the restoration of that liberty which was so dear a name to them. Now was their opportunity, for Clement VII, Alessandro's firm supporter, was dead and, though the exiles in the end were disappointed of their hopes, yet there was hostile feeling abroad when, on December 26th, the Duke and his escort rode into Rome. Here the Florentine exiles (conscious no check would come from high quarters) thought it a propitious occasion for mocking at his followers, and his reception by Paul III, the new Pope, was little warmer than that given by the people whose feelings found vent in coarse jests scrawled on the walls of the palace where he lodged. It was therefore with no very pleasant feelings that the two young Medici went on to Naples. Here, however, things went better, and though Cosimo lost the chance of once more seeing the Emperor make a state entry, the essential object of Alessandro's visit was attained and the exiles gained but a scant hearing from Charles with no further satisfaction than one of his favourite evasive answers. Nor was this surprising, for the divisions among the *fuorusciti* were only too visible, and if a patriotic note was struck by Jacopo Nardi (himself not clear of the imputation of having more than once changed his party) his words were too heavily discounted by the interested motives and questionable sincerity of Filippo Strozzi and others of the aristocratic faction. Division seemed indeed the salient feature of this gathering of Florentines at Naples. Here Cosimo found two Salviati uncles, Cardinal Giovanni and Bernardo, Prior of Rome, siding with the exiles, while

a third, Alamanno (the friendly uncle of his Venice days) was for Alessandro. "So that these close kinsmen, of old dear and familiar friends, if they met one another as they rode about Naples, did not so much as greet each other<sup>1</sup>."

In spite of their weakness and dissension the exiles were roused to one last eloquent outburst which even now warms the heart. Alessandro offered them on his part full amnesty and restitution if his authority were recognised. There was no faltering in their answer:

We came not here to ask his Majesty on what conditions we were to serve Alessandro, nor to gain from him, at his Majesty's instance, pardon for that which we justly and duly did for the good of our country; nor again that we might, for the sake of having our goods restored, return as servants into that town whence we came as free men<sup>2</sup>.

Such was the impression made by this ringing defiance that Charles V did his best to exonerate his ministers from any share in the hated proposal. But it was too high a note to be sustained, and in a few days the exiles themselves were busied in drawing up schedules of the conditions under which they might consent to return to Florence. Charles, however, was not prepared to devote more time to these petty quarrels, for such the differences of Italian citizens must have seemed to him. Francis I was on the point of invading Savoy and the *fuorusciti* were of the French faction; how could Charles be expected to favour men who would foment disturbance in Italy and welcome his lifelong enemies?

Cosimo may or may not have been interested in these  
1536 grave matters. The divisions among the Florentines, no new thing to him, may perhaps have come home to him with greater force when, in his

<sup>1</sup> *Istorie fiorentine...di Bernardo Segni* (Firenze, 1857), p. 292.

<sup>2</sup> Ferrai, *op. cit.* p. 217.

shrewd silent way, he observed how these men by their lack of union defeated their own ends. But he had many other subjects of attention. Naples, with her wonderful setting of sea and promontories, was probably the largest and surely the fairest town that he had ever seen. And Naples was at her very gayest in that carnival of 1536 when the masked balls and other festivities in Castel Capuano were a sight to see. Here Alessandro again met Margaret of Austria, now a maiden of fifteen. All Naples knew that, when he dismounted with due honours at the Castle and did his obeisance to the Emperor, he had also ventured to kiss Margaret on the cheek after the Flemish fashion, in the sight of the whole court, and this though the betrothal was still to come. It was fixed for January 29th, and on that day the nobles of Italy, Este, della Rovere, Farnese, with four Venetian ambassadors, assisted at this first formal recognition of the new dukedom of Florence. Then followed a splendid banquet given by Don Pedro de Toledo (whom Cosimo was far from suspecting to be his future father-in-law). So far the boy's life had lacked sobriety rather than diversion, and one would imagine that these fresh gaieties were likely to unsettle him more than ever; surely no one could have reproached Cosimo too severely if his roaming, merry-making boyhood had given him an incurable distaste for serious work.

And festivities were not yet at an end for him. He and his cousins (Lorenzino being also in the Duke's train) left Naples in March, 1536, Alessandro full of satisfaction at the course of events at Naples and looking forward with pride to a visit from Charles at Florence. This duly took place in May, amid every possible display of art and magnificence, every pageant conceivable by the ingenious architects and painters of the day. Cosimo himself did not go to greet Charles on his entry, for the sinister Lorenzino was to be present and

Maria Salviati advised her son to avoid being seen with him. Lorenzino's fortunes were at a low ebb and his temper all the more uncertain; some unintentional oversight, to be afterwards magnified into a deadly affront, might occur if he met his favoured cousin in public. Yet Cosimo was not forgotten. Not seeing him, "the Emperor asked where was the son of the Signor Giovanni? The Duke replied that he had stayed behind and straightway sent for him, who came and, being in the Emperor's presence, with much grace kissed his knee (for he was a handsome youth of full sixteen years). The Emperor, looking in his face, clapped his hand on his shoulder and said: 'Be glad, *figliuolo*, that you are the son of a Cavalier who made France and Spain tremble!<sup>1</sup>'"

Cosimo held his head high in those days and, we may be sure, was not in the background when the rejoicings began afresh on the arrival of Margaret of Austria. Yet darker colours were interwoven with these gay scenes. Only the year before, Alessandro had narrowly escaped a plot to kill him, in which his cousin Ippolito was undoubtedly implicated. A few months later, and the handsome, impetuous young Cardinal was himself dead and, if the belief that his sudden end was due to poison (administered by order of the Duke he had tried to murder) is now in the main discredited, it must not be forgotten that, at the time, such a rumour would surely be rife in Florence. In Florence, too, in the same year of 1535, Cardinal Salviati came near being poisoned, and though he was saved, the poet Berni (to whom he owed his life) paid for his uprightness by his own death at the instance either of Ippolito de' Medici or of another Cardinal—Innocenzo Cybò<sup>2</sup>.

Mutterings against Alessandro were to be heard also

<sup>1</sup> Ferrai, *op. cit.* extract from a Diary, p. 237.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 182 (also A. Rossi, *Francesco Guicciardini e il Governo fiorentino dal 1527 al 1540*, Bologna, 1896, vol. II pp. 199, 200).

in other more democratic quarters and may have reached the ears of Cosimo. Alessandro was reckless in his *amours*, and more than one worthy family cursed his name. Now, too, Lorenzino more often crossed Cosimo's path, grown from a capricious boy into a soured, eccentric youth, and in these days much about the Duke, sharing in his pleasures, whether open or secret. Lorenzino can have been little congenial to his younger cousin. The shrewd, practical Cosimo would have small sympathy for this thin, unprepossessing young man who seemed destined to be unlucky. For at least, Cosimo might observe, whenever he and Lorenzino came in contact, Lorenzino was the loser; what a poor figure he had cut in Venice compared to the "son of the Signor Zanin"! Even at Bologna, if Cosimo had failed to win the bride proposed for him, Lorenzino at least had gained little by his attempt to complicate his cousin's affairs by setting up as his rival. And now, to crown all, when he was already hard put to it for money, when now he needed it more than ever in order to make a brave show at court, the long-drawn-out lawsuit between him and Cosimo was at last decided, and entirely in Cosimo's favour.

There is no need to dwell at length on Lorenzino's state of mind, ably analysed by Signor Ferrai. All-important as his action was to Cosimo, Cosimo himself was in no way really concerned with the successive events which roused Lorenzino to a passion of fury against Alessandro, until the Duke seemed to him the "demoniacal instrument of adverse fortune," while swelling thoughts of tardily awakened patriotism and burning resentment for the man who designed to dishonour his kinswoman were inextricably mingled and spurred him on to murder.

Of Cosimo we learn little directly in these years from 1534 to 1537. No Riccio had gone with him to Naples to give his mother intimate details of his doings and

whether, left to himself, Cosimo quite neglected his correspondence, or whether the letters he wrote are lost, the archives seem in either case to give scanty information. From now onwards, however, he was to be the central figure on the stage; and details of his life, for good or for evil, are not wanting.

## CHAPTER III

### MURDER OF ALESSANDRO AND ELECTION OF COSIMO— PARTIES IN FLORENCE—FIRST DAYS OF COSIMO'S RULE — MONTEMURLO — COSIMO AND FILIPPO STROZZI—EARLY RELATIONS WITH CHARLES V— GUICCIARDINI AND CARDINAL CYBÒ

IT was on the night of the Epiphany, 1537, that Alessandro prepared to follow Lorenzino to the neighbouring palace where lived the Medici of the Pierfrancesco line. As he started, he hesitated whether to take his gauntlets or his perfumed gloves: "Which shall I choose," he said, "those for fighting or those for love-making?"<sup>1</sup> But in the end, blindly confiding in the cousin whose name he was prepared to dishonour, Alessandro went unarmed but for his sword. In pleasant expectation of seeing Lorenzino return with his kinswoman, Alessandro undressed and lay half drowsing. The door opened to let in Lorenzino indeed, but behind him a figure even more sinister. Alessandro started up, but it was too late. Strong and vigorous as he was, and fighting for his life, what could a naked unarmed man do against two men, one of them a hired assassin? Yet in the horrid struggle Alessandro caught his cousin's finger and bit it to the bone. Lorenzo *il traditore* would carry that mark to the grave. But he had done his work and all that remained was to escape from Florence by means of a pass already procured which would open the city gates to him at night. Furiously he rode up the mountainous road towards Bologna, trying, it may be, to forget those awful moments in the quiet room where the Duke's corpse now lay, still undiscovered.

<sup>1</sup> B. Varchi, *Storia fiorentina* (Firenze, 1853), vol. v. p. 269.

Next morning Cosimo, who was up at il Trebbio with his cousin Piero Salviati, was told that Lorenzino had passed near by in the night riding northwards, his hand bound up. At once some injury to Alessandro was conjectured, as if the close connection between the two young men, apparently so affectionate, had boded a sinister deed. Or Maria Salviati's words may have come back to her son. Asked one day by Alessandro why she so hated Lorenzino she replied: "Because I know it is in his mind to slay you and slay you he will." Alessandro, like them all, had scoffed at the idea of danger coming from Lorenzino, but Cosimo, always ready to learn from experience, may well have noted the folly of despising even a contemptible enemy overmuch. For though Alessandro, less quick-witted than those about him, looked on Lorenzino as his friend to the last, it is very probable that his cousin's ill-regulated nerves betrayed something of his secret to a keen observer.

That day Cosimo and Piero Salviati went hawking as usual, but next day the soldiers about the place (some fourteen veterans of the Black Bands) were summoned to Florence, and on this Cosimo thought it well himself to go down, being met by a messenger from his mother as he approached the gates on the morning of January 8th.

Cardinal Cybò was at that time the head of Alessandro's government, and, on learning of the Duke's death, his first impulse had been to keep the matter secret until enough troops had been brought into Florence to avoid the danger of any tumult. Ridolfo Baglioni, therefore, had promptly gathered his bands together and taken command until the Captain of the Guard, Alessandro Vitelli, who was at Arezzo at the moment, hastily summoned, arrived thence with all speed.

Alessandro had been buried in San Lorenzo and his

widow safely lodged in the new fortress, guarded by Vitelli's men, before the groups of citizens, gathered here and there, were murmuring that something strange was on foot, for why did not Duke Alessandro appear, why was no audience of him to be had? What were these rumours that Lorenzo had demanded horses and vanished in the night? Thanks to Vitelli's prompt measures, there was little to be done but talk and of that there was probably no lack. "The greater part," Adriani declares, "who had been shut out from government, desired that the city should return to its old state, and that the Signoria and the Palagio<sup>1</sup> should once more have that which had been reft from them<sup>2</sup>." Aspirations, indeed, there were in plenty; noble and pathetic longings for that *libertà* which had always been to the Florentines an ideal to lift them above the pettiness of daily life. Yet it may be doubted whether, in this crisis, there was such enthusiasm for freedom as Adriani, Varchi or Segni would have us believe. For if, as Signor Rossi justly observes, "the aversion from the *principato* was so deep, and above all so general, how comes it that Florence did not flame into one of those outbursts of popular fury which no obstacle damps and no force can keep down?<sup>3</sup>" He analyses clearly enough the different opinions current in Florence, and we may conclude that some among the citizens (and those the most wealthy and respected) wished the government to be in the hands of the Medici, but as it had been before 1527 and before the award of Charles V created the dukedom; others again, desired a revival of the still simpler days when Lorenzo il Magnifico had been but the first among his fellows; and a third party sighed under their breath for the rule of the people. The *Giovani*—those turbulent youths,

<sup>1</sup> The Palazzo Vecchio, where the Priori sat in Republican days.

<sup>2</sup> G. B. Adriani, *Storia dei Suoi tempi* (Prato, 1822), vol. I. p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Agostino Rossi, *L'Elezione di Cosimo I de' Medici* (Venezia, 1890).

always to the fore in any Italian rising—longed for liberty, but there were also many men whose friends or kinsfolk had been exiled by the late republican government, who therefore combined with the poorest classes in hating the rich aristocrats and preferring an absolute prince to government by an oligarchy. But, except among these detested *Ottimati*, at whose head was the ablest politician of the day, Francesco Guicciardini, there was little definite thought or action. Florence had indeed exhausted herself in her supreme struggle of six years past, and now no more than the echo of brave deeds and heroic words was left her. Once more every man was seeking his own good and careless of the general welfare; the chief preoccupation of their minds was how they might be most secure from any *vendetta* for the past.

The chief of the Ottimati, then (Guicciardini, Francesco Vettori, Roberto Acciaioli, Matteo Strozzi and Matteo Niccolini), were prepared to hold with the Medici. As successor to Alessandro they could, it was clear, choose no other than Cosimo since, Lorenzino and his brother being now necessarily excluded, he, by Charles V's award, was the only heir. For this end they worked, sending Girolamo degli Albizzi to sound Maria Salviati on the subject of her son's election and, as Signor Rossi surmises, to beg her to send Cosimo a messenger, urging his prompt return from il Trebbio. These keen-eyed citizens knew that there was plotting in Florence and were aware that they must be on the alert if their plans were to succeed. The only intriguer who, besides them, had a definite scheme, was the present head of the government, Cardinal Cybò. He, with Alessandro Vitelli to help him, had in hand a private design of his own and proposed to nominate Duke Alessandro's illegitimate son Giulio as his successor, and thus (Giulio being a mere child), in reality himself to rule Florence for many a year. Vitelli was

won over by the offer of a coveted possession, the lordship of Borgo S. Sepolcro, and Cybò judged that the setting aside of Cosimo (Charles' nominee) would be more than compensated in the eyes of the Emperor by the fact that, during a long minority under a regent devoted to imperial interests, Habsburg claims to the sovereignty of Florence might by insensible degrees be substantially strengthened.

The first step to his end he took on the morning of January 8th, when the Senate (or Quarantotto) were summoned by him to Council, and, fixing on him as the most intimate of Alessandro's councillors and less odious than some, either to the people or the enemies of Casa Medici, appointed him regent. The Cardinal refused the honour, for he hoped, by prolonging the state of confusion, to hurry on the election of a Duke, since only in a troubled, turbulent assembly were Giulio's claims likely to find supporters. But his refusal, his secret interviews (plainly covering some unconfessed design) with Vitelli, a notoriously violent man, roused the suspicion of Guicciardini and his friends, and convinced them of the need for prompt action<sup>1</sup>. Thus Cosimo's arrival seemed to them more than opportune, and his first action showed great adroitness, for he at once went to wait on Cardinal Cybò at the Palazzo Medici in Via Larga, offering him "that aid which the necessities of his country called for." As he left the Palazzo, intending next to visit his mother, "everyone in the street bowed and greeted him...and some openly pointed him out to their companions, adding that he would be Alessandro's successor and the avenger of his death<sup>2</sup>."

Indeed there seems no doubt that the appearance of this graceful, pleasing youth, already a little stately and reserved in manner, created a certain stir in

<sup>1</sup> A. Rossi, *op. cit.* pp. 44, 53

<sup>2</sup> Manucci, *op. cit.* p. 50.

Florence. The soldiers, and in especial the many veterans of the Black Bands, were in a most enthusiastic humour and did nothing but boast his real or imaginary good qualities until "a murmur began, which swelled into a roar, that Cosimo son of the Signor Giovanni (that valorous Captain), must be Duke of Florence<sup>1</sup>." Cosimo's supporters naturally fostered this spirit among the soldiers, and it had the effect of materially changing Vitelli's intentions, for it was on the soldiers he depended and he could do little in Florence should they not side with him. Cosimo himself in this brief interval seemed inclined rather to draw back than to further the bold plans of his friends. Above all, he evidently wished for no display of force, but had at the outset refused to enter Florence escorted by his father's veterans, as they had begged. He had no mind to make himself unnecessary enemies, and preferred to be apparently spurred on by his mother and Guicciardini, who spoke encouragingly. It mattered little to Cosimo that "those who judge a fruit by its rind, esteemed him of poor spirit and meek<sup>2</sup>."

Meanwhile, Cardinal Cybò and Vitelli, realising that the new-comer could not be disregarded and that the Ottimati must also be considered, agreed, chiefly at the instance of Guicciardini, to summon the Senate next morning to a meeting in Palazzo Medici, when matters must once for all be decided. Cosimo's friends thought it well that he should himself be in the palace, within call, on this occasion, and Cardinal Cybò, now making a virtue of necessity, took him aside on his arrival to the loggia "that looks on to Piazza San Lorenzo and there made him promise to do four things if he were elected: To administer equal justice; not to swerve from the imperial authority; to avenge the death of Alessandro, and to see that the Signor Giulio and the Signora Giulia, natural children of Alessandro, were

<sup>1</sup> Ammirato, *op. cit.* p. 220.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem.*

well treated<sup>1</sup>." All these promises, adds Varchi, Cosimo fully observed, it being, so later authorities have pointed out, his interest to do so. Cybò then went to the assembled senators and, beginning his speech with the Virgilian lines:

...Primo avulso non deficit alter  
Aureus, et simili frondescit virga metallo,

himself proposed Cosimo as Duke, conformably to the decision of Charles V in 1532. On this Domenico Canigiani, following the prompting he had had from Cybò, proposed, as if on his own initiative, the little Giulio, but met with so cold a response that he was hurriedly disavowed by his leader and the incident led to nothing. More interesting and more sincere was Palla Rucellai's hot protest "that he, for one, wanted nor Dukes nor Lords nor Princes in the Republic," and that if he saw the scaffold before him he would never yield to the creation of another Duke or Prince. Then, taking up the white bean that meant a negative vote, he showed it them all before casting it in the urn, declaring: "Thus do I vote<sup>2</sup>." But his spirit failed him to make good his brave words and, as soon as the new prince was elected, he hastened to do him homage. A proof of weakness for which, as Signor Rossi observes, "the wretched condition of the times is the sole excuse<sup>3</sup>."

Discussion still continued. The vague desire for free government was crushed by the leaden weight of past events and the looming terrors of the future. Without, there was the danger of still further subjection to the Emperor, the dread of seeing in Florence what Milan already groaned under—a Spanish Governor. Within, the Ottimati were the last people to feel any security in their position; Guicciardini was perhaps not merely trying a political wile when he said that "he, for one,

<sup>1</sup> Varchi, *op. cit.* vol. v. p. 291.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 292.

<sup>3</sup> Rossi, *op. cit.* p. 62.

would not endure that the Ciompi<sup>1</sup> should govern Florence.<sup>2</sup>" The only light in the darkness seemed that which he showed them; the hope of a temperate government under a leader of authority so restricted that at least some appearance, some outward show, of liberty would be preserved. Slowly the assembly yielded to Guicciardini's arguments, but perhaps the debate might have lasted longer, giving scope for more vain and glowing speeches, had there not been a diversion. This was caused by a scuffle in the street among the soldiers, perhaps accidental, perhaps created on purpose by Alessandro Vitelli, who stood, a sinister emblem of Spanish authority, fully armed at the door. Later legends picturesquely reported him as entering the Council Chamber and truculently exclaiming: "Do you make a new Duke or I will have you cut in pieces," but there is likely to be more truth in the version that a mysterious voice was heard crying at the door: "Hasten, hasten, for the soldiers can no longer be held nor restrained."

This put an end to hesitation and Cosimo was duly elected the head and governor of Florence and its territories. Then the new prince, who all this time had been waiting, pacing up and down the loggia, was summoned to the Council and entered with a bearing at once proud and respectful. Doffing his cap and bowing low he made a brief speech of thanks on being told of his election, declaring that, young as he was, he would ever have the fear of God before his eyes and uphold honesty and justice; formal words, which meant little to any concerned.

The great moment was over, the crisis past, and Florence gave itself up to merry-making, at some expense to the new governor, as the people began by sacking his

<sup>1</sup> The Ciompi were the wool-carders and here equivalent to the mob.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide Varchi, Adriani, Rossi, passim.*



*Giorgio Vasari*

COSIMO ELECTED DUKE OF FLORENCE  
From a picture in the Palazzo Vecchio

*Photo Biogr*



palace and carrying off not a few valuables. He meanwhile went soberly home to sup with his mother<sup>1</sup> that evening, while the bonfires were blazing and the bells ringing joyful peals. He needed time to reflect on this new life opening before him and felt himself for once a very passive instrument in the hands of fate.

In later years the story of his election grew into a legend which was thus reported in 1561 by Vincenzo Fedeli, the Venetian Ambassador to Florence.

The Quarantotto<sup>2</sup>, being met to decide on their course of action after the death of Alessandro, were disturbed in their debate by a tumult in the piazza. Looking out in alarm, "by chance they saw the Signor Cosimo who was returning from his villa." On which they hurriedly elected him head of the Government, fearing lest delay might cause a rising. So that, "the election seemed surely made by the Divine will alone, for," says Fedeli rather sweepingly, "it pleased neither the people nor the state nor Cesare." And, he adds:

as David by the will of God was called from pasturing sheep to rule a kingdom, so Cosimo was summoned from hawking and angling to the *principato*; and it is now a common saying in Florence that this youth assuredly flew his birds at eagles and ger-falcons, and angled for sharks and whales, seeing he hath taken such great birds and such mighty fishes<sup>3</sup>.

One legend no doubt leads to another, yet it is to be regretted that Colonel Young in his history of the Medici should keep alive the old tradition of hostility to the second Duke of Florence. Nor is it easy to understand why he speaks of Cosimo's "bold bid for power," and describes him as acting without consulting his mother, "who liked neither the thing itself (*i.e.* his election) nor his methods and endeavoured to persuade him to abandon the course on which he had embarked<sup>4</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> Varchi, *op. cit.* vol. v. p. 295. <sup>2</sup> *I.e.* the Senate of Forty-Eight.

<sup>3</sup> Albèri, *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti*, vol. i. serie ii. pp. 336-7. <sup>4</sup> Young, *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 235.

But, among contemporary writers, Varchi alone represents Maria as naturally fearful for her son and trying to dissuade him from venturing to accept the ducal coronet should it be offered, while Cosimo answers her forebodings in one of Varchi's favourite set speeches. Even here, there is but anxiety and surely no disapproval on the part of Maria; and Ammirato moreover expressly contradicts Varchi's statement and on such a point is as likely to be accurate as the more famous historian<sup>1</sup>. Maria's own words, too, show at least no distaste for her son's election, nor do they indicate much initiative on his part. Writing to a certain priest, Bernardo della Tassinara, she says to him:

As Vostra Signoria may have learnt by another of mine the news of his Excellency's death, so we think well to inform you that the magnificent Forty-eight of the Florentine Republic willingly and in full accord (concordi e volontari) elected the Signor Cosimo my son as their Lord, who has ever been a dutiful god-son to Vostra Signoria, looking on you as one ever full of affection for the Signor Giovanni, his father, of blessed memory. And we, from the confidence we have in you, have thought well to let you have word thereof, that you with us may share in our joy... Florence, 11 January 1536 (s.f.)<sup>2</sup>.

Afterwards, too, Maria firmly supported her son in opposition to her brother, Cardinal Salviati. Cosimino, she explicitly told him, had not sought this high honour but since the dignity had come to him he must uphold it. Nor was she daunted by the dangers threatening him, to which the Cardinal then gloomily referred, but declared herself ready to face them even if it were a question of life or death<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Ammirato, *op. cit.* vol. III p 222

<sup>2</sup> L Cantini, *Vita di Cosimo de' Medici* (Firenze, 1805), p. 501. Signor Ferrai, referring to this same letter, says that Maria in it speaks of Cosimo's election as the *factura di Dio*, an even stronger statement. The words do not occur in the edition of Cantini above quoted, but are a further indication of my comments on Maria's attitude in the matter. (Ferrai, *Cosimo de' Medici* etc p. 42.)

<sup>3</sup> G. E. Saltini, *Tragedie Medicee domestiche*, Firenze, 1898, p. xxviii.

The hostility to the memory of Cosimo thus finds material on the very day of his election, and, often as the grosser calumnies have been disproved, a lingering prejudice still seems to induce his biographers to paint him in legendary colours. In Colonel Young's words do we not hear an echo of the old republican declamation against Cosimo? Does he not picture Maria as the helpless mother of the Tuscan Tiberius, as Cosimo was usually named by his classically minded contemporaries?

But, leaving for the moment the more private side of Cosimo's life, an attempt must now be made to give a slight sketch of his position as head of the Florentine Republic, which may serve to show what an important event his election was, not only for Tuscany, but for all Italy.

The reader, from the brief account already given of the state of parties in Florence, will have observed how

1537 little solidarity or cohesion existed in any but that which was guided by Guicciardini's wise counsels. And a study of Italian and foreign authors, whether contemporary or modern, will probably convince him that, in the main, deplorable as was the loss of Florentine liberty, no other salvation could be found for the moment but in the election of Cosimo. Throughout Italy in the year 1537 and for many a year to come, there was a slow and wearisome struggle for the mastery of the peninsula between France and Spain, breaking out, now here, now there, into war. Suddenly the petty quarrels of a hill-town like Montalcino or Perugia might acquire wide significance, and be the turning-point in French or Imperial fortunes. How could Florence, then, fail to feel these changed conditions, and was it possible that Charles V would for a moment look on unmoved should the republican party prevail in Florence? Florence was by long tradition French in

her sympathies and hardly likely to lean more than usual to the side of that Emperor who had so lately humiliated her. Clear-sighted men of the day saw the grave danger that Florence, if she rebelled again, would shortly be no more than a strip of Spanish territory, ruled by such viceroys as Milan and Naples groaned under. It is difficult to blame Guicciardini for doing his utmost to save his native town from such a fate, and it may even be suggested that, had the Florentine exiles been gifted with the same foresight, had they possessed some disinterested love of country, they might have spared Florence much of that severe repression to which Cosimo, rightly or wrongly, considered himself forced, in his efforts to oppose a firm front to the insidious attacks of Spain. The ever-present danger of a conspiracy in Florence itself, supported by an armed attack of the *fuorusciti* without, may surely have contributed in some measure to Cosimo's slow transformation of the limited authority with which he was originally invested into a despotism, tempered indeed with justice, but absolute and at times ruthless.

Nor was it an unreasonable expectation on the part of Guicciardini and his friends that the exiles would yield, with more or less good grace, to the new order of things; this was, to thinking men, no fit moment for intransigent patriotism and friends were not wanting to put the case plainly before them. Thus did Francesco Vettori, intimate both with Guicciardini and with Filippo Strozzi, one of the leading exiles, write to the latter on the subject of Cosimo's election. When Cybò had refused the post offered him,

"we," he says, "fearful lest the people (an enemy both of yours and ours) should seize what few weapons they had and chase us away, robbing and slaying, seeing no swifter remedy than that of electing a head, elected...as head of the city the Signor Cosimo de' Medici, who is but a youth, yet who hath up to now shown such promise as

to offer every ground for good hope. You will say: I see there was no word of me, nor no thought for my plight... but you must reflect that the fortress we have here above us is imperial... the fortress of Livorno is held by a Pisan and likewise a foreigner<sup>1</sup> holds that of Pisa, and one and the other are both devotedly imperial. At Lerici there are two thousand five hundred Spaniards, at Genoa four thousand Germans, and all these, if the imperial agents so much as suspected that we wished to swerve from Caesar, would straightway be upon us. You are held to be for the French; your Piero hath been and is in the pay of the most Christian King, and, had we so much as spoken of you, I make no doubt we should have fallen under suspicion and have been constrained to stomach a Spanish Governor. And if indeed the French forces had succoured us, yet they would but have ruined the country and the imperialists the city. Filippo mio, for the love of God, have pity on this poor city, have pity on your friends and kinsmen<sup>2</sup>."

But Filippo hesitated. With him, as with too many of the *fuorusciti*, it was a personal question and, from having once been an intimate of the Medici, he had now come to hate them. Brilliant but unstable, he was a poor leader for the most ardent exiles, among whom at Venice he was now hearing loud praises of "Laurenzio the Liberator," and imprecations on the perfidious tyrant *cujus anima requiescat in abisso!* He no doubt read the rather blasphemous paraphrase of the 98th Psalm composed at this time which began: *Cantate Florentini Laurentio canticum novum, quia mirabilia fecit.* Yet this enthusiasm was little to the taste of Filippo, who wrote gloomily to Cardinal Ridolfi and Cardinal Salviati, the other leaders of his faction: "Meseemeth the benefits that were to come from the action of our Brutus will be but vain, as with the other; Augustus succeeding to Caesar."

Vettori wrote urgently again on January 30th:

I would have you understand that all that is done in favour of France maketh us slaves to France and brings us into the same straits as Milan.... Strive to save us from war and have done with talking of

<sup>1</sup> To the Florentines everyone outside their own territory was a foreigner.

<sup>2</sup> G. B. Niccolini, *Filippo Strozzi* (Firenze, 1847), pp. 216-231.

Brutus and Cassius or of restoring the republic in the city, for 'tis not possible. 'Tis yours to make this sick state live and see that it be not given medicines so strong as to slay it<sup>1</sup>.

However, entreaty was vain and no words would convince Strozzi against his will of the necessity of Cosimo's election. He wavered indeed, and made a show of acquiescence, only to end by proposing impracticable solutions. Private interests with him, as with too many of the exiles, came before the good of Florence. His letters reveal this only too plainly:

"As for my private interests," he protests on one occasion, "fain would I be restored to my country, and if I needs must stay in Venice, without using this advantage for the satisfying of my adversaries, I will gladly stay as long as is desired, for the name of rebel is most hurtful to my traffickings and dealings as a merchant.... Moreover, I desire to finish my *palazzo* and exact monies due to me, a thing impossible to one who is dubbed a rebel. Tell Salviati on my part that (I seeing no way whereby to restore liberty to our country according to his desire) it were haply better he should embrace the cause of his Nephew and seek to make him master of the fortresses and of the state...for at present meseemeth he hath the title and another the power. And this with the intention of persuading him [Cosimo] afterwards to leave our country her liberty, the city buying him a state elsewhere, quiet and secure, even as we offered such to the late Duke in Naples<sup>2</sup>."

Faint-hearted words like these were bitter reading to Filippo's warlike son Piero, who wrote violently to his brothers, Roberto and Leone:

Our father thinks no longer of his goods nor of his children, but makes the strangest and most shameful suggestions that ever were heard...he writes...so contemptibly that I am persuaded you would die of grief did you see his words, so that from due respect I do not send you his letters. Suffice it that, if you do not return, I shall be the most ill-content man in the world, and all will go to rack and ruin<sup>3</sup>.

Here, then, we have the opposite extreme of the policy followed by the Florentine exiles. Now they

<sup>1</sup> Niccolini, *op. cit.* pp. 216-231

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 255. <sup>3</sup> *Idem*, p. 298.

vacillated between a desire to further their private ends and yet make no reasonable compromise with their enemy; now they resorted to violence, with no adequate means of carrying out their threats. Pride or self-interest too often blinded them, and, while they were in their own eyes magnified into heroes and martyrs for the sake of liberty, they lacked that power of self-forgetfulness which marks the true patriot.

Whether they hesitated or whether they threatened, the *fuorusciti* sufficiently complicated matters during the first months of Cosimo's rule, and truly it was under no easy conditions that the youth of eighteen made his earliest essays in government. The incubus of the Spanish garrison in the fortress on the outskirts of Florence, and the distant rumours of war, were not all that preoccupied his mind. Even more pressing was the necessity to blend or quell the discordant elements among his own countrymen, none of whom at that moment did he trust. Guicciardini, Cosimo saw plainly enough, aimed at making him no more than the leading citizen in Florence, closely dependent on the statesmen who had helped him to that post. Cardinal Cybò he had his own private reasons for distrusting. Alessandro Vitelli must be conciliated indeed, but there was no confiding in a man more than half his enemy. Except for his mother we may safely say that Cosimo can have found no adviser at once able and high-minded, for Guicciardini, nominally his chief councillor, for all his sagacity and prudence, had little nobility of character. Learning thus early to mask his real feelings, to lock his secret thoughts in his heart, making use of the very men he despised, what wonder is it that dissimulation (a quality more admired in his country and century than in ours) became second nature to Cosimo? Nor can his biographer fail to regret that no finer influences surrounded him in those years when character can still be modified. Yet we may well ask where such could

have been discovered in the Italy of that day, and must deplore rather than wonder at some of the future developments of Cosimo's character. At present we have chiefly to deal with the surprising gifts for organisation and government which he soon displayed to such a degree that even his enemies could not but acknowledge them.

Cosimo, then, was in the saddle, but few of those who surrounded him can have thought his seat secure,

1537 or even have envied him the task of keeping it.

Fewer still, perhaps none but his mother, judged him capable of the feat. The late Duke had given his time chiefly to amusements, and the best known trait of Cosimo's character up to the present was his passion for hunting and fishing, so that Guicciardini was not the only one to expect that Cosimo di Monna Maria:

would, with the twelve thousand ducats granted him as his private income, devote himself to enjoyment and employ himself in hunting, fowling and angling (things wherein he greatly delighted) whilst Guicciardini with a few others would govern and, as the phrase is, suck the state dry<sup>1</sup>.

But, continues Varchi (who, it must be remembered, had no love for Guicciardini):

'tis ill reckoning without your host, and Cosimo, who had been considered slow witted, though of sober judgment, now showed himself so admirably endowed with understanding that the saying was current that wisdom had been bestowed on him by God together with the *principato*.

To us, who know he was no raw country boy, the fact gives less surprise, and, even if we discount some of the popular admiration and attribute some at least of the praise to the wise counsels of Francesco Campana his first secretary, none the less the young man's application to affairs of government was remarkable and his personal stamp is very early apparent. On January 19th we read in the report of a Sienese envoy:

<sup>1</sup> Varchi, *op. cit.* vol. v. (edition of 1803), p. 296.

From what the said Messer Ottaviano<sup>1</sup> tells me, he (Cosimo) is everything and does everything; for when speaking with me he used these words; referring to...the Otto<sup>2</sup>, he said to me that Sua Signoria Illustrissima was both the Otto and the Dieci<sup>3</sup>.

The first independent action on the part of Cosimo was, Ammirato assures us, the granting of an amnesty to the exiles. On January 30th in fact, another of the Sienese envoys writes, that it has been decided:

that all the Florentine exiles, except Lorenzo de' Medici...can at their own will and pleasure return and dwell in Florence, but disarmed like all the other citizens...and they hope by this means to pacify all, or, at least to learn the mind of these exiles, whether it be turned to peace or no.

Thus we must perhaps reject Ammirato's inference that this action was due merely to generosity and rather see in it a wise political measure. For these were very critical days and Cosimo had great need both of reconciling Florence to his election and of ascertaining the real aims of the exiles. This decree brought back to Florence many of the poorer citizens (who thus might reasonably become well affected to the *principato*). On the other hand, the more important *fuorusciti* held disdainfully aloof, thus, from the Government's point of view, finally putting themselves in the wrong and enabling Cosimo clearly to see his way. Florence was in a restless uneasy state, for Vitelli's seizing on the fortress in the name of Charles V had given great umbrage, and though Cosimo, lodged in Palazzo Medici (while the widowed Duchess was more safely bestowed in the fortress), had a clear field, he was in no very safe position and his former supporters themselves wavered uncomfortably and came near cursing their apparent folly in having elected him.

<sup>1</sup> Ottaviano de' Medici, uncle by marriage of Cosimo through his wife Francesca, sister of Maria Salviati.

<sup>2</sup> The Otto and the Dieci were magistrates.

<sup>3</sup> Arch. Stor. Ital. serie v. vol. v. 1893. "Cosimo I de' Medici e i fuorusciti del 1537, da Lettere di due Oratori Senesi," article by Cesare Paoli and Eugenio Casanova, p. 292.

But the head of the Government kept his wits about him. He hastened the despatch of an embassy to Charles V, announcing his election, and, since this was no more palatable to the exiles than Vitelli's capture of the fortress, he urged that certain Spanish troops lately arrived at Genoa should with all speed be sent to Tuscany. Meanwhile, conscious that the *fuorusciti* would be busily plotting against him, he lost no time in writing to the various towns in his dominions to bid them assist the Otto di Pratica<sup>1</sup> in the work of keeping the peace. Cosimo's position in the little country places was strengthened by the love still felt for his father, and the enthusiasm for the great soldier's name enabled him easily to recruit forces against the exiles<sup>2</sup>. Open war however was not to come yet. Three Cardinals proposed to visit Florence and see if their arguments or persuasion could not prevail with this inexperienced young man. They had indeed good hope of inducing him to resign his new dignities, but the keen-witted Paul III (who had helped to foment their opposition to the new Government) is said to have remarked to his chamberlains when the Cardinals took their leave: "Where are these madmen going?"<sup>3</sup>

Blissfully ignorant of this view of their proceedings, Cardinals Salviati, Ridolfi and Gaddi set out for Florence in the middle of January with every expectation of an enthusiastic welcome, which somehow fell unaccountably flat. Yet they should already have had misgivings, for, arrived at Montepulciano, they learnt that Spanish troops were on the way to Tuscany, and the reassuring words of Francesco Bandini, sent from Florence for the express purpose, were needed to induce them to continue their journey. Even so they were given to

<sup>1</sup> These magistrates had, among other duties, to see to the victualing and otherwise to provide for the safety of the fortresses of the Florentine State.

<sup>2</sup> Adriani, *op. cit.* vol. i pp. 32, 57.

<sup>3</sup> Ammirato, *Opuscoli*, vol. iii. p. 226.

understand that they must come as peaceable citizens and that no armed followers would be admitted. Thus tutored, they set off again, less martial in their bearing, while the cries of *Palle*<sup>1</sup> in the country places they passed through augured ill for the likelihood of their success, should war break out. On their arrival at Florence, Jacopo Nardi gives an enthusiastic account of their reception, and no doubt expresses the feelings of those who hoped that:

"thanks to their prudence and authority, the matter of the government...might be settled in such a form as should be favourable to liberty. All the people," he relates, "went to meet them at the gate...so that they were received as if they had been peculiar Saviours sent by God. Yet soon," he adds mournfully, "it was seen how far more constant are men in keeping possession of a state than in seeking to restore lost or suspended liberty<sup>2</sup>."

In fact the crowds who greeted the Cardinals at Porta S. Niccolò, just when the bells were ringing Ave Maria, were far too ready to cry *palle, palle, Duca*. The Cardinals may have tried to comfort themselves with the reflection that it was Cosimo's presence alone which had such an inspiring effect, but the sounds were no more pleasing for that, nor did his having come to meet them do much to improve their temper. Indeed, Ridolfi was so upset by their reception ("as if honour given to another were an insult to him") that, "without a word to any, he turned off from S. Niccolò by Via del Fondaccio and Via de' Bardi and went to dismount at Palazzo Ridolfi in Via Maggio<sup>3</sup>." Cardinal Salviati on his part, lodged in the family palace, lost no time in urging his point of view on his sister and nephew, but without the result he hoped for. Maria as we have said showed no weakness, though her brother tried by

<sup>1</sup> The cry of the Medicean party, referring to the *palle* of the Medici coat of arms, *vide ante*, p 2.

<sup>2</sup> Jacopo Nardi, *Istoria della città di Firenze* (Firenze, 1858), vol. II. p. 291.

<sup>3</sup> Ammirato, *Istorie fiorentine* (Firenze, 1641), parte II p 441.

entreathy and even by threats to induce her to press Cosimo's abdication. Instead, he began himself to reconsider the position, not forgetting, says Varchi, that his kinsman's advancement might favourably affect his own aspirations to the papacy. On this, dissension at once broke out among the company gathered in Palazzo Salviati to discuss the situation. Cardinal Ridolfi would hear of nothing but the old republican government, with gonfaloniere and priori as before. Francesco Vettori then

turning to Baccio Valori said: "Baccio, what understand you by this question of the gonfaloniere and the government that you desire to make?" And, Baccio replying that nought mattered to him providing only it were free, Francesco answered: "If you purpose to guard the government, 'twill not be free; and if you would set up the government unguarded, who will hinder the people from chasing you away with stones and forcing you to dishonourable flight?" At once Cardinal Ridolfi said in great wrath: "Then, Francesco, are we to suffer an iniquitous act and set up tyranny in our country?"....On which Francesco, himself wroth, said in answer: "Aye, we must needs do this iniquitous thing and set up a tyrant, for that in these times we can find no path that is truly straight<sup>1</sup>."

But in fact the Cardinals, as was apt to happen in the affairs of the exiles, had come on the scene too late and had to deal, moreover, with a young man whose will was firm and whose mind was made up. "So long as I live," he protested almost passionately, "they (the Cardinals) shall never gain their ends nor subject Florence to France<sup>2</sup>." In spite of the many difficulties with which he was beset, the victory was sure in the end to lie on the side of energy and fixed determination, and never did Cosimo's opponents in those early months show themselves anything but irresolute until despair goaded them to ill-judged resistance.

<sup>1</sup> Segni, *op. cit.* p. 334.

<sup>2</sup> Ranke, *Historisch-biographische Studien*, vol. XL. of *Sammliche Werke*, p. 393.

During the Cardinals' stay in Florence the doors and gates of the town were closely guarded and soldiers stood round great fires at every street corner<sup>1</sup>, looking askance at the exiles, who for their part no doubt loathed such a display of force and cursed the name of Alessandro Vitelli. But still the trio lingered on, until the authorities grew weary. Some writers say that Maria Salviati urged Vitelli to alarm the Cardinals by a display of the soldiers he could muster; some say (and one would judge this to be more probable) that Vitelli acted on his own initiative, and, in plain enough words, requested them to leave as their presence only caused jealousy and discord. He had as usual armed men at his back to support his arguments. In any case it was with a crestfallen air that the would-be peacemakers slipped away from Florence, going first to a villa owned by Baccio Valori. It was hinted, however, that "it was not well for them to stay there, and thereupon, full of fear and as it were like men bereft of sense (quasi mosche senza capo) they set out for Bologna<sup>2</sup>." Salviati, however, may be said to have fired a Parthian shot in a letter he shortly wrote to his nephew, in which he tried to make him uncomfortably aware of his dependence on others and, by implication, of his folly in refusing to accept the proposals made him:

"It seems to all, whether within or without the city," declared the Cardinal, "that Vostra Signoria hath not such authority as that they are able to trust to your good will or friendly disposition, but that you rather are dependent in all things on others nor can they easily persuade themselves that it could be otherwise, since this dependence now hath lasted long and the Florentines are not wont to obey any but themselves. From this comes every ill....I would have you bear in mind that there are few about you who love you or are dependent on you, which meseemeth is a disastrous thing<sup>3</sup>."

His nephew may reasonably have doubted whether the Cardinal was to be reckoned among the former, but

<sup>1</sup> Varchi, *op. cit.* vol. v. p. 318.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 320.

<sup>3</sup> Ferrai, *op. cit.* p. 26.

Salviati's advice illustrates Varchi's observation that every citizen in Florence thought not only that he could, but that he ought to, keep Cosimo tightly reined in. Instead of succeeding in this however, it became apparent in the end that the exiles had met more than their match. Lacking the skill to compromise and the wisdom to combine whole-heartedly, they drifted inevitably into a war for which they were ill prepared, dragging with them the reluctant Filippo Strozzi who now unwillingly was forced to hand out his money to his eager son. In an evil moment for himself he moreover joined the troops of the *fuorusciti* in person.

It is not the writer's intention to devote much space to those events of Cosimo's rule which can be found in any history, or which do little to bring out his special characteristics. But the rout of the exiles at Montemurlo is interesting as the first occasion when the Duke's prompt and resolute measures signally defeated his wavering and irresolute enemies. Cosimo had need to act decisively, for in these early months (April, May, June, July) there was unrest on all sides. Pier Luigi Farnese, son of Pope Paul III, was instigating rebellion at Pisa; at Pistoia the secular feud of the Panciatichi and Cancellieri was fomented in the interests of the exiles, as was that between the Pichi and Graziani at Arezzo<sup>1</sup>. The *fuorusciti*, wrote Cosimo on April 17th to his ambassador in Rome:

are massing their troops at Savignano and 'tis their design to strike on different sides, that they may force us to divide our troops and dismay us and put us to greater expense...and on our side all hath been provided for and we hope in God to decide this question in such wise that we be not for ever tormented by these travails and suspicions<sup>2</sup>.

There is no denying that Cosimo was making good his boast that, for all that he was a boy, he would act like a man.

<sup>1</sup> Ferrai, *op. cit.* p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 50.

Less wise were his enemies, for Piero Strozzi, at the end of July, pushed on towards Florence from La Mirandola, never waiting for the main body of his troops to join him. When news of this reached Cosimo, a proclamation was at once issued "that corn and all such things should be carried into the city; and to-day which is Sunday," says the Sienese envoy, "all the roads are full of carts, executing this order<sup>1</sup>." In fact, it seemed an incredible thing that Strozzi could have ventured so near unless he was strongly supported. But the amazing fact was none the less true and with him were his father Filippo, Baccio Valori and other of the exiles, who posted themselves in the dilapidated hill-fortress of Montemurlo, distant about seven miles from Florence in the plain of Pistoia, nor so much as attempted to make it more secure. So sure of success was Baccio, that Giovio with his vivid touches describes him as going over to his villa and there pacing leisurely up and down the loggia, while he questioned his bailiff "as to the vintage and how the new grafts had struck and even of the sport of taking partridges... But Filippo, weighed down by blind fear, like one who saw no help near, walked apart," and only breathed again when Piero, whom they had out-distanced, appeared<sup>2</sup>.

It is possible that the *fuorusciti* were deceived both as to the numbers of Spanish troops at Cosimo's disposal, and as to the support they might count on from the Cancellieri, and it would indeed be typical of Italian warfare of the day if treachery, as well as unpreparedness, played a part in their defeat<sup>3</sup>. At least they paid bitterly for their negligence. Against them came Alessandro Vitelli and Otto da Montauto, a brave and determined leader. Vitelli, who, with Montauto,

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Stor. Ital.* vol. *cit* p. 327.

<sup>2</sup> *Delle Iстorie del suo tempo di Mons. Paolo Giovio, tradotte da M. Lodovico Domenichi* Seconda Parte, p. 527 (Venetia, MDCVIII)

<sup>3</sup> Ferrai, *op cit* p. 64, and Ettore Callegari, *Preponderanze Straniere*, p. 22 (Milano, no date).

had already defeated Piero Strozzi in a skirmish near Prato, was in no hurry to attack. But Montauto said boldly: "Let us see if fortune favours the Emperor and the Signor Cosimo," and in silence they began to climb the steep slopes of Montemurlo<sup>1</sup>. The resistance they met with was as vain as it was brave, for the garrison was taken completely unawares. Piero had already been made prisoner in the earlier skirmish but, with his usual good fortune on such occasions, escaped. Filippo, however, was now captured, with Baccio Valori, Anton Francesco degli Albizzi, two young Valori and many more.

Thus ended the last phase of the struggle made by the Florentine Republic against Charles V<sup>2</sup>, for it was Spanish troops who gave Cosimo the victory, and Cardinal Ridolfi, writing to Cardinal Salviati, had observed: "'tis now plain to all that these are no longer civil discords, but that 'tis with barbarians we now have to do, for honour and liberty's sake." Yet, as will be seen, Spanish aims were furthered less than was expected by Cosimo's success.

And here it will be well to glance at the map of Italy in the early months of 1537 and to touch briefly on the more important of the many states and their rulers at the date of Cosimo's election. To the north, Piedmont was leading a troubled career under its dukes. The encroachments of France threatened the duchy so seriously that little attention was paid to Italy at the Turin of that time. Emanuele Filiberto, indeed, when his star had risen, would look with no very friendly eye on the increasing power of Tuscany, but that day was distant and until his accession the outlook for the house of Savoy was gloomy. Milan, with most of the great plain of Lombardy, was already under the hand of a Spanish Governor, the Marquis del Vasto. And Genoa, though nominally a free republic, ruled by its

<sup>1</sup> Saltini, *op. cit.* p. xxxii.

<sup>2</sup> Ferrai, *op. cit.* p. 61.

doges, and more particularly by the D'Oria, was to all intents and purposes also secured to Spain. Whenever it should be needful, the grip upon her could be strengthened and with that the Emperor might well be content. Into the orbit of Spain, Mantua, bordering on the Veneto, would inevitably be drawn. In 1537 Federigo Gonzaga, only seven years promoted by the grace of Charles V to the rank of duke, had lately been further complimented by receiving from him the investiture of the marquisate of Montferrat. But to east and south-east of Mantua there was a check to the growth of Spanish influence, and Venice with her broad lands and rich cities stood out boldly for her rights and independence. Ferrara, too, proud of her long line of marquises and dukes of the Este family, inclined rather to France than to Spain and the Empire. The Gonzaga had for the moment forgotten their French kindred, but at Ferrara the reigning duke, Ercole II (who had succeeded in 1534), was married to Renée of France, while his daughter Anne was to keep up the French tradition by her marriage to the duc de Guise.

Then came the wide sweep of papal territory, the Emilia, Romagna, the Marche, Umbria; territories that still tended to expand, blotting out old names and memories. The Manfredi of Faenza, the Polenta of Ravenna, the Malatesta of Rimini, the Bentivogli of Bologna and many another family had all given place to papal legates. A greater prize was yet to come to the Church in this same century, and even before Cosimo's death the childless Alfonso d'Este felt the menace to his states, and knew that the lapse of Ferrara with all her treasures and associations to the Pope was almost inevitable. One more coveted possession was later to round off the papal lands towards the Adriatic—the rich duchy of Urbino. But as yet the della Rovere seemed strong and flourishing under Francesco Maria I, and nothing could presage the rapid extinction of the

line in his courtly grandson and namesake, Francesco Maria II. One breach in this wide extent of states was shortly to be made by Paul III who first made famous the name of Farnese. Some seven years after Cosimo's accession he alienated Piacenza and Parma from the lands of the Church to form a duchy for his natural son, Pier Luigi, having first cast his eyes on other possibilities, till he became a thorn in the flesh to Cosimo, who could not be sure whither the Pope's restless ambition might not lead him. Charles V was ready to further Farnese aims if by that means he could obtain papal support, and there was every reason to conjecture that the new duchy of Parma would become a centre of French and imperial intrigue. Bordering on Tuscany, the little republic of Lucca lived a trembling life, ever dreading to be absorbed by her powerful neighbours, Florence and Genoa. And south of Florence, turbulent Siena was likely to deepen the furrows on Cosimo's forehead in years to come. Below the papal states, again, stretched the various lands—fertile and barren, smiling and sullen—of the kingdom of Naples or the Regno. This land, after almost more vicissitudes than any that had fallen to the chequered lot of mediaeval Italy, was now the vassal of Spain, governed by one of the few statesmanlike Spanish governors known in Italy, Don Pedro de Toledo. To north of him and south of him Cosimo saw the foreigner in the land. How he succeeded in the task he set himself of freeing Tuscany at least from Spanish encroachment the sequel will show.

The news of Montemurlo soon reached Florence, and on the very day, August 1st, 1537, Tantucci, our Sienese, reported :

Throughout the city are heard cries of *Palle, palle*, and victory, victory; many guns have been fired from the castle, so that these Signori are full merry....There is great rejoicing, and from two

windows on the ground floor of the Signor Cosimo's palace much bread hath been thrown and is still being thrown, and from two wooden pipes they are continually pouring out a quantity of wine<sup>1</sup>.

The Signor Cosimo himself, ever careful to fulfil his obligations, summoned the citizens to a solemn thanksgiving for the victory in the church of the Santissima Annunziata. But there was inevitably another side to the matter, and following on rejoicings came the trial and execution of the leading exiles. This has been taken as a typical instance of Cosimo's naturally cruel and vindictive nature, and yet it might well be argued that, in his precarious situation, he dared not do otherwise than strike terror by his severity. Nor in so doing could he fairly be condemned by the standards of the day, when Guicciardini thought it no shame to write: "There can be no greater happiness as this world goes (secondo il vivere del mondo) than to see your enemy prostrate before you; to this nought can be preferred<sup>2</sup>." And to the Sienese, Tantucci, the whole affair seemed natural enough. "These Signori," he wrote on August 4th, "are quietly seeing that these prisoners are receiving the chastisement they deserve, and to-day have again beheaded three more<sup>3</sup>." Even Jacopo Nardi does not feel himself called on to complain of excessive severity. Giovio points out that Cosimo stayed his hand sooner than might have been expected, and if he is none too accurate an historian, yet in this case he does but bear out what is said by others. Cosimo, he says, judged several of the rebels (so the exiles were now commonly called) as deserving only of long imprisonment, "namely, Paolo Antonio Valori, son of Bartolommeo who was beheaded... Braccio Guicciardini, Vieri da Castiglione, Battista Canigiani and Chiurlo Macchiavelli... and suffered to be ransomed Giovanni Adimari, Amerigo Antinori and il Leprone

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Stor. Ital.* vol. cit. p. 329.

<sup>2</sup> Saltini, *op. cit.* p. xxxiii.

<sup>3</sup> *Arch. Stor. Ital.* vol. cit. p. 332.

Rivieri, taken by the Spaniards, when he could well have hindered this, for it seemed to him unfitting to put more men to death, and he desired to make an end of the injury he had received<sup>1</sup>." Segni, it is true, speaks of the horror of the people on seeing the executions continue for four days, and it was indeed a grim sight; even heated partisans felt pity for Filippo Valori, son of Baccio, who was but a youth, and did not escape like his brother. But they were involved in the downfall of their father, who was not unjustly hated by all Florence since he had helped to overthrow the popular government of Piero Soderini, and had, to his shame, been a bitter enemy to Florence, acting as commissary in the papal camp at the time of the siege. Nor in fairness must the fact be omitted that certain of the victims had no very great claim on the mercy of the government, two among them having been homicides before acquitted, and one of them convicted of having agreed with Baccio Valori to betray the *citadella vecchia* of Florence<sup>2</sup>.

In spite then of Segni's horror and his assurances that, though the lamentations of the people put an end to the executions, the prisoners remaining for the most part died of sickness in the fortress of Pisa, there is perhaps no need to join in the outcry. And this disinclination is encouraged by a letter written at this time to Cardinal Cybò by the Marchese del Vasto, Charles V's governor at Milan<sup>3</sup>.

"Illustrissimo e Reverendissimo Signore," it runs, "From letters of Vostra Signoria Reverendissima I have learned that the Signor Cosimo, rather than punish the rebels who are his prisoners, is fain to pardon them. I cannot but commend such mercy, but if I may be suffered to say out my thoughts, it seems to me unwise, since Vostra Signoria Reverendissima tells me that the people of

<sup>1</sup> Giovio, *op. cit.* p. 533

<sup>2</sup> Arch. Stor. Ital. vol. *cit.* p. 332. The *citadella vecchia* is here explained to be the little fortress at the Porta della Giustizia.

<sup>3</sup> Given by L' Cantini in his life of Cosimo, p. 507.

the city desire they should die as penalty for their fault. And this methinks would be the will of his Majesty, both because they have offended his honour, and because they are ill-doers (*persone tristi*). But inasmuch as V. S. R. doth not lack wisdom to discern the truth I will do no more than commend myself humbly to Vostra Signoria. Di Milano, xvi. agosto MDXXXVII. Servitor devotissimo di V. S. Il Marchese del Vasto."

Thus it would seem that Cosimo was by no means singular in considering that such heavy chastisement was allowable, nor even bent upon showing such rigour. To the commutation of death sentences already referred to, another instance may be added. The citizens were forbidden under heavy penalties to hide a prisoner or to help him escape. Such a case was discovered by the magistrates and the man by them condemned to death, but Cosimo, intervening, reversed the decision and pardoned him<sup>1</sup>.

One more prisoner still remained in the fortress of Florence, jealously guarded from Cosimo by Alessandro Vitelli to whom he had surrendered. Much has been written on Filippo Strozzi, the prisoner in question. The Tuscan poet, Niccolini, was inspired by his fate to write a tragedy, and Cosimo has inevitably been credited with having compassed his death. That he wished to get him into his hands is plain, but whether with the purpose of having him executed is less clear. That Charles V wished for Strozzi's death seems certain, and that Filippo himself dreaded above all things to fall into the power of the Duke of Florence is also undeniable. We know that to him and his party Cosimo was a blood-thirsty tyrant. There is more than one ambiguous fact in Cosimo's life, more than one secret of his heart to which archives give no key, and here it is only possible to relate the course of events, leaving the reader to draw his own conclusions.

The story is made none the more clear by the

<sup>1</sup> Ammirato, *Istorie fiorentine*, parte II. p. 453.

occasional contradictions in Cosimo's own words. If we reject the summary method of assuming all his kindlier utterances to be false and all his harsher ones true, we shall probably fall back on the hypothesis that his mood varied. Thus, when some months had gone by, and he found himself tolerably secure from overthrow, it is very likely that his hostility to Filippo diminished with his fear of him. Even his earlier despatches show no vindictive hatred, if no softening. Writing to the Emperor on September 28th, 1537, he says, referring to the other exiles, that:

that decision was made which was conformable to justice and to the service of your Majesty, and to the peace and quiet of this state...and thus I entreat your Majesty to take it [the sentence] in good part; and in the course of these proceedings, Filippo Strozzi hath appeared as one of greater importance and better known to your Majesty, but not therefore deserving of less chastisement<sup>1</sup>.

The whole affair was decided rather in Spain than in Florence, and the despatches of the Florentine ambassador, Averardo Serristori, paint for us the shifting scene at the imperial court, where first one side, then the other, seemed to prevail. Now it was Filippo's ardent partisans who gained the ear of Charles' ministers, Covos and Granvelle; now it was Cosimo's envoy, Giovanni Bandini, who kept alive the Emperor's resentment against Strozzi, with suggestions that Filippo was seducing Vitelli from his imperial allegiance, or with revelations of a plot by which Vincenzo Strozzi intended to kill his father's enemy, Cosimo. In spite of this, the current of feeling in Spain was favourable to Strozzi and it was with anxious feelings that Cosimo wrote the following letter to the Marchese del Vasto:

"Plead for me," he begged, "since my affairs are truly in need thereof (hanno non solo bisogno ma necessità) for, to speak honestly with your Excellency,...meseemeth that with these agents and

<sup>1</sup> Firenze, *Archivio di Stato, Mediceo, Minute di lettere*, filza 2.

ministers of his Majesty (and in especial with those of Rome) I have been changed into Filippo and Filippo into me. Let, then, his Majesty, whatever decision he comes to, deign to execute it promptly, for so will his honour be better served (to my greater satisfaction and that of all the city) be the decision what it may. For this delay, amid the divers rumours from many factious partisans, might well in time bring forth ill effects, the which would then spread not indeed by my fault, but assuredly not without bringing me shame and loss" (14 Nov. 1537)<sup>1</sup>.

In the atmosphere of plot and intrigue which reigned at the Spanish Court, Strozzi's friends avoided direct methods and strove—but surely without knowing their man—to work, unobserved by him, on Cosimo. This we gather from a later despatch sent from Spain by the ambassador, Serristori. He reports on a proposal made by Covos and Granvelle that Bandini (Cosimo's second envoy) should write to the Duke of Florence enquiring how he felt he could best be assured against Strozzi:

"I will not omit to say," continues Serristori, "that this meseemeth is a design of theirs by which they desire in dealing with his Majesty so to write of your Excellency as to save him (*i.e.* Filippo), they saying: as your Excellency writeth that, to assure yourself against Filippo, this and that would serve, it were as if such a suggestion came from your Excellency, they thus securing greater support to deal with his Majesty and so gain their end<sup>2</sup>."

Serristori himself was plainly of opinion that Strozzi was too dangerous an enemy to be allowed to live, and full of anxiety lest, whatever happened, the blame should fall on his master:

"It seeming," he had before written, "as if his Majesty's intentions had not been carried out by your Excellency, so that, added to the injury which may come to you, should Filippo live (nor alone to your Excellency but doubtless to all the city), in time of peace, it may be that, in time of war, all the blame of not having followed his Majesty's commands will be put on your Excellency, and that those who haply urged he should be kept alive will be the first here to reproach and vilify you<sup>3</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. etc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> *Legazioni di Averardo Serristori...con note..., di Giuseppe Canestrini* (Firenze, 1853), p. 61.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, p. 49.

For his Majesty's wishes must still be law to the Duke of Florence, and what these were was clear. All the efforts of Strozzi's partisans and the proposals—perhaps no more than official—made by Giovanni Bandini for his release, never seriously affected Charles who so often concealed an inflexible resolution under a mask of hesitation. Cardinal Granvelle himself, speaking, we must assume, only as his master's mouth-piece, had said to Bandini before now: "A dead man can make no war"; for such, comments Adriani, was the Emperor's mind from the first day he heard of Strozzi's imprisonment<sup>1</sup>. Bandini for his part writes, "they tell me his Majesty was much pleased at the just execution of those who are dead, and that the like should be done with Filippo"<sup>2</sup>. Again, when Filippo's pardon was promised to the Pope should he be found innocent of complicity in the murder of Alessandro, "it was done in such a manner as to let it clearly be seen what result was looked for."

It is therefore plain that to the Emperor, Strozzi, whose innocence he seems (unjustly enough) to have doubted, was personally hateful. We must not indeed forget that the murdered Duke was Charles' son-in-law. Determined to dwell on this feature of the case, the Emperor sent peremptory orders that Filippo should be examined for proof that he had been privy to Lorenzino's design. Cosimo then, for some reason which is not so clear, had a certain Giuliano Gondi, close friend to Filippo, examined under torture (instigated, it is said, by Filippo's enemy, Cardinal Cybò)<sup>3</sup>. Gondi confessed that both he and Filippo had been concerned in the murder, but afterwards categorically denied it in the presence of Don Giovanni de

<sup>1</sup> Adriani, *op. cit.* vol. I. p. 118.

<sup>2</sup> G. de Leva, *op. cit.* vol. III. p. 229, note.

<sup>3</sup> L. A. Ferrai, *Filippo Strozzi prigioniero degli Spagnuoli* (Padova, 1880), p. 13.

Luna, the newly appointed castellan of the fortress of Florence, in succession to Alessandro Vitelli. "I lied in my throat," he said, "and shall lie each time I say it, and this they caused me to say by torture and will cause me<sup>1</sup>," nor is there any reason to disbelieve Strozzi's innocence. He too was tortured, but revealed nothing, and Cosimo averred that great leniency had been shown him by Don Giovanni, who would not allow him to be questioned further, "being corrupted by the aforesaid Filippo," says Cosimo, adding disgustedly, "daily does this Don Giovanni seem to us a more contemptible person." The report of such clemency seems to have angered Charles, incensed as he was by Gondi's confession, the contradiction of which had not reached him. On the other hand, de Luna protested that the torture was severe, but in any case, after Gondi had retracted his words, Filippo enjoyed greater liberty and favour than before. To de Luna had succeeded yet another castellan, Don Lopez de Hurtado, who gave Filippo more or less the freedom of the fortress.

Thus all seemed going well for him and he was cherishing hopes not only of life but also of liberty when an imperial messenger arrived with very different orders from what he expected, Charles commanding that Strozzi should at once be handed over to Cosimo. Resentment had prevailed over pity and there seems little doubt that Filippo, feeling himself betrayed by Vitelli who had promised him his life, and deserted by his friends who had not withheld his surrender to Cosimo, committed suicide. For the order that consigned him to Cosimo's keeping reached Florence on December 16th, 1538, and Filippo was found dead in prison not twenty-four hours after the arrival of the messenger who would, he confidently expected, bring his pardon.

<sup>1</sup> L. A. Ferrai, *Cosimo de' Medici*, p. 98.

Other rumours as to the manner of his death were current, one of which Ranke has disposed of. But so trustworthy an historian as Reumont believed that Cosimo had Strozzi secretly put to death directly he was in his power. To this Signor Ferrai pertinently objects first, that Filippo had not yet been handed over to Cosimo's charge, and secondly, that the Duke had no reason for observing any secrecy. Filippo, if he were cleared of complicity in the murder of Alessandro, would nevertheless come under the same condemnation which had brought Baccio Valori and the other prisoners of Montemurlo to the scaffold<sup>1</sup>. The belief in Filippo's suicide is further strengthened by a document found in his room and now judged to be authentic, which, with its classic flavour (so dear to Strozzi's generation), probably not inaptly describes his frame of mind: "I, Filippo Strozzi," it ran, "...have resolved with my own hands to end my life. I humbly commend my soul to God who is all-merciful, praying Him, if He will concede me no greater boon, at least to grant I may come to that place where are Cato of Utica and other like virtuous men who have made this end<sup>2</sup>.... And I implore thee, Caesar, with all reverence, acquaint thyself more fully with the state of this poor city of Florence...if indeed it be not thy aim to ruin it. Philippus (*sic*) Strozza, jam jam moriturus. Exoriare aliquis ex ossibus meis, mei sanguinis ultor!<sup>3</sup>"

So he ended, with a confused recollection of Virgilian lines. We can picture how these words will have rung in the ears of his sons and of their party, forgetful of Filippo's once vacillating counsels, and now seeing in him nothing but a martyr to liberty.

More soberly did Cosimo take the news of his death, writing the following day to Giovanni Bandini at the Court of Charles:

"...Don Giovanni (de Luna) came to the Rev<sup>mo</sup> Cardinal Cybò and to me and expounded to us the resolve of his Majesty<sup>4</sup> con-

<sup>1</sup> Ferrai, *op. cit.* p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> Dante, *Purgatorio*, 1

<sup>3</sup> Ferrai, *op. cit.* p. 108.

<sup>4</sup> *I.e.* that Filippo should be handed over to Cosimo.

formably to what was expected of his justice and wisdom. And since Don Giovanni was instant that it should be carried out that same night, and it seeming to us that such speed, indeed such precipitation, was not alone unneedful, but against the directions of his Majesty (who ordered that Filippo should be tried and examined, in witness to all men that nought had been done save in due course of justice) we judged that that same evening the examination should begin, and continue for three or four evenings until all had been extracted from him that positively could be.... That then the Otto<sup>1</sup>, according to the law of the city, should pass that sentence which they deemed fitting, it seeming to us that otherwise the matter would not pass conformably to the will of his Majesty and with what is due to justice, it being already spread throughout Italy by those who were seeking to set Filippo free, that at his first examination nought had been confessed by him.... That evening then, at nightfall (the twenty-third hour being wellnigh past) there came a man to me...from the said Don Giovanni, to say...that Filippo Strozzi was not to be found, and that his chamber was locked and none could enter. We sent the Signor Pirro Colonna with several gentlemen to see...and...they found the said Filippo stretched dead on the floor...with two swords beside him, both of them bare, and bloody at the point, and another, sheathed, on a chest. A thing which hath caused me great grief, both for the hurt to the soul of the poor gentleman, and also because meseemeth that thus his Majesty's command hath been ill executed, and moreover there might have been drawn from him much that were of great importance and profitable to this State.... At the end of the writing left by him," says Cosimo later, "he boasts that he has died for his country.... And Filippo," he adds, it is to be feared not without a touch of complacency, "at the time of his death was studying a work of Plutarch's with the title: *Concerning those who are tardily punished by God*," his death being, in Cosimo's opinion, "rather the judgment of God than of Cesare<sup>2</sup>."

Even if Cosimo in his heart echoed Charles V's reported words on hearing of the death of Filippo: "May all that injure me come to a like end," it cannot be denied that the Italian expressed his feelings with less rancour. Still more is this apparent in a letter written to Cardinal Pucci. The reader may judge for himself of its sincerity, but the words if true would

<sup>1</sup> Presumably the Otto di Guardia e Balia, criminal magistrates.

<sup>2</sup> For all this *vide* Ferrai, *op. cit.* pp. 110-112.

certainly acquit Cosimo of intending to put Filippo to death:

I write to Vostra Signoria Reverendissima of a sad thing that happened yesterday, whereof you may have heard from another source and which hath caused me to feel grave and called for grief. Filippo Strozzi, having lost his reason, took his life, at a time that was favourable to him and when we thought to save him. You may well believe that this thing hath saddened me, and it grieves me that I cannot let all see the compassion I feel therefor. The ill disposed will have much to say thereof, and this reflection also pains me<sup>1</sup>.

Cosimo had crushed his declared enemies for the time being, but there was still the Spanish power to reckon with and this was a problem of greater difficulty, which demanded much skilful handling. To form some idea of the problem and the way in which it was dealt with we must return to the first embassy to Charles, sent off almost at once on Cosimo's election, as well as to the second despatch of envoys which followed on the skirmish of Montemurlo. Charles on his part had been prompt to make enquiry into the state of matters in Florence, whither he had sent his envoy Cifuentes in the spring of 1537. Cifuentes, his head entirely confused by the contrary demands with which he was assailed on all sides, decided that it would be to his Majesty's advantage to recognise the *principato* (as being the only definite form of government proposed) and confirmed Cosimo in his position as head of the city. This act was ratified by the Emperor at Monzon on September 30th of the same year, but not before Bandini and Serristori had used their eloquence to safeguard the interests both of Cosimo and of Florence. For Charles seized the opportunity to suggest that Florence should be treated as an imperial fief, of which he would grant Cosimo the investiture. To this the envoys made the firm reply that Florence was a free city and neither Emperor

<sup>1</sup> Cantini, *op. cit.* p. 515.

nor Prince had authority over her; all that was needed was the confirmation of the privileges granted to Duke Alessandro<sup>1</sup>. It is clear that in these early days they could but save Cosimo's dignity in theory, for a Spanish castellan held the citadel of Florence, but the principle of their contention was in the end admitted by Charles and proved of service when Cosimo increased his claims to power and independence in later years. He was now styled no longer Lord, but Duke of Florence, and contented himself therewith for the moment, but still his ambassadors urged the speedy removal of the Spanish commandants from the Tuscan fortresses and begged the hand of Margaret of Austria for their young Duke. To neither of these proposals did Charles incline, even if he did not expect such a reversal of the government in Florence as was confidently predicted by the Venetian ambassador in Spain.

"He said to me," reports Serristori, "'twas to be hoped his Majesty would hand over these fortresses to your Excellency, for thus we citizens would be set at liberty. And I replying, 'how set at liberty? his Majesty hath confirmed the lordship of Duke Cosimo; what mean you?' he answered, that, as the fortresses were restored to your Excellency and the Emperor deprived thereof, he judged your Excellency's affairs would be settled in three or four days (faceva spedito in tre o quattro giorni), for that you could not hold out against the citizens, concluding that that was what was desired by us citizens and by all Italy<sup>2</sup>."

None the less, Cardinal Granvelle was by no means pleased when Bandini, breaking through the thin disguise, tried to force from him the admission that it was the vassalage rather than the safety of Cosimo which Charles had in view.

Disconcerted by such astuteness, Granvelle said: "We will speak thereof more at length another time, but I would have you observe

<sup>1</sup> Adriani, *op. cit.* vol. I p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> Serristori, *op. cit.* p. 50.

that these are matters to be kept most secret, for that they are of grave import and doubtless will give umbrage to many<sup>1</sup>."

Nor did the ambassadors gain the consent of Charles to Cosimo's second demand, for the hand of Margaret of Austria. She, poor child, had taken most kindly to Florentine ways, so that Cosimo could truthfully write, "'Twould be serving both his Majesty and his daughter, were she left here, she being known as Duchess of Florence and loved by the people<sup>2</sup>.'" But Charles needed the support of the Farnesi and Cosimo's ill-will in these days would affect him little, the Duke being personally still a cipher to the Emperor. The reluctant Margaret was given to Ottavio Farnese, son of Pier Luigi Farnese, afterwards Duke of Parma, and would seem to have had good reason to lament the choice of husbands made for her by her father.

We may well suppose that this first trial of strength with the imperial power was calculated to make Cosimo feel keenly the extent of his weakness, and we may conjecture that he was more disposed to stand out for his independence and dignity as an Italian prince than might have been the case had Charles shown greater regard for his interests. In this as in many other events of his life Cosimo's advantage and that of Tuscany were identical, and we must remember, in admiring his skilled statesmanship and diplomacy, not to credit him with that disinterested love of country which was so redeeming a feature in the character of Macchiavelli. Cosimo learnt, in after life, the prime necessity of making himself useful, and if it might be, indispensable to the Emperor, as a means both of extracting concessions from him, and of obtaining support in his relations with the Pope and the other Italian states. But for the moment he was merely intent on increasing his authority at home as a pre-

<sup>1</sup> G. de Leva, *op. cit.* vol. III p. 228

<sup>2</sup> Staffetti, *Card. Innocenzo Cybò*, p. 197.



*Angelo Bronzino*

COSIMO, DUKE OF FLORENCE

*Photo Brogi*



liminary to having a free hand in his dealings abroad. Benvenuto Cellini's words were to come so true, that the reader half wonders if he were not wise after the event:

These men of Florence have set a youth on a wondrous horse; they have given him spurs and put the bridle freely in his hands, and brought him to a fair place full of flowers and fruits and other delights. And thereupon they have bidden him not to pass certain bounds, and I ask you: Who is he that can withhold him, if he desires to overpass them?<sup>1</sup>

During these early months, Guicciardini no doubt was pondering some such thoughts, and reflecting on the uselessness of the wisest provisions for temperate government. These had been made in plenty, yet the constitution drawn up by Clement VII for Alessandro had the weakness of dividing the executive authority in such a way as to make its concentration in the hands of one man an easy matter even for a ruler of less individuality than the one Guicciardini had chosen. Thus, no sooner did Cosimo begin to feel himself more secure, than he consulted his *magnifici consiglieri* less and less. The various functions of the government were not thereby impeded, for, though the councils of the Two Hundred and of the Forty-Eight (otherwise called the Senate) still continued, though the old magistracies, such as the Otto di Balia and the Otto di Pratica, were busily employed, the Duke was perpetual president of all these bodies, and nothing could be proposed, far less resolved on, without his sanction. Thus almost insensibly Cosimo accustomed his ministers to leave matters to him, assisted notably in this evolution of policy by Francesco Campana. Nor was this concentration and centralisation of authority at the moment otherwise than for the good, not only of Florence, but still more of the rest of the Florentine dominion. This

<sup>1</sup> *La Vita di Benvenuto Cellini da lui medesimo* (Firenze, 1891), p. 192.

was at last amalgamated under Cosimo as it had never been under the Republic, whose maxims were: To keep Pisa poor, Pistoia divided and Volterra strong<sup>1</sup>. His repressive policy, which fell so heavily on Florence and which was not unjustly considered tyrannical, was greatly relaxed towards the other towns of the Florentine state. This tendency to consider their claims to fair treatment must not then be forgotten in summing up Cosimo's deserts, however much we may regret that Florence herself suffered some of the harshness which she had of old meted out to others. Guicciardini expressed the traditional sentiments of the past when he wrote: "In short, I would that matters were regulated according to this maxim: That those who are not of our part should receive no benefits at all, save such as are needful to win from them what use and profit is possible<sup>2</sup>." Cosimo at least, with all his faults, had a love of justice more disinterested than many of his motives and not even his less favourable critics denied him the praise of laying the foundations of better government, as will be seen in the sequel. And, when we look on his broader policy as an Italian prince, it is to his credit that he long and steadfastly resisted Spanish encroachments, no small praise being due to so young a man for his clear vision of the necessities of his state, even if his own personal ends largely contributed to his constancy. In the course of his life it will be more clear how *Italian* was the whole atmosphere of his court, and this in spite of his Spanish wife in a day when Spanish influence "was penetrating every order of Italian society, affecting manners, life and thought; all concurring to force on Cosimo, whom none had expected to see a ruler, the intolerable yoke of foreign protection<sup>3</sup>." But instead of finding in him

<sup>1</sup> Ferrai, *op. cit.* p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> *Lettere di Principi* (Venezia, MDLXXXVI), vol. III. p. II.

<sup>3</sup> Ferrai, *op. cit.* p. 217.

nominally an independent prince, but in reality a vassal and tributary, even Charles V before his death had to reckon with the Duke of Florence as a valuable ally, a power to be conciliated.

Cosimo was still, in his own estimation, troubled by two inconveniently powerful councillors; Guicciardini 1538 and Cardinal Cybò. Guicciardini, seeing himself gradually but irresistibly set aside, had the prudence and foresight to escape to a dignified repose in which he could muse at leisure on the difficulties of combining love of country with self-interest. But Cardinal Cybò showed less wisdom. For reasons that are very obscure he fell into disgrace after having, in 1538, represented Cosimo during the negotiations at Nice between Pope and Emperor. Finding his expectations disappointed and himself no longer so important a figure as of old in Florence, it is possible that he again bethought himself of the little Giulio, son of Alessandro, who had once before served as a stalking-horse for his ambition. Giulio emerges again from the background on the occasion of the departure from Tuscany of Duchess Margaret, now to go to Rome to meet her future husband, Ottavio Farnese. Giulio presumably had up to now been with her and she desired to take him with her. But here Cosimo intervened, writing the following note to the Marchese d'Aguilar, imperial ambassador in Rome:

The Signora Duchessa as is reported to me, designs to take to Rome the Signor Julio, (son of the Duke Alessandro of happy memory) as one who hath ever had, and hath, a singular affection for the boy, due both to the memory of her husband, and to his own gracious disposition. Thus, carried away by this affection, she haply does not consider of how great import it is should she now take him from her house to lodge him in the house of Farnese, nor what blame and prejudice to my honour and my house would follow on such a decision. Whence meseemed good to say a word with this to your Excellency, begging you consider the importance of the event and

thereupon do what seemeth to you convenient for the service of his Majesty, for my honour, and for the benefit of the Signor Giulio<sup>1</sup>.

However, Giulio started with the Duchess but was sent back to Florence from Siena and lodged, to the general surprise, not in Casa Medici, but with Cardinal Cybò. Little attention was at first paid to this, but soon it appeared there was much talk about the affair; that Giulio was waited on with great respect and addressed by high-sounding titles; again it was remembered that on the occasion of his father's funeral he had worn the ducal dress. From this it was a short step to hints, and more than hints, that Cosimo had wished to poison him and that Cybò had the boy in his charge for the sake of his safety; so soon was calumny busy. But we may let the Duke tell his own tale. Writing to Giovanni Bandini he said:

When Madonna Margherita went away, it seemed to us a strange thing that Julio should go to Rome into the hands of the Farnesi, for many reasons that will be plain to all. Whence I summoned the Cardinal and discussed the matter, saying it seemed to me nowise fitting that Madonna should take him to Rome. He agreed that it was not good to let him go, and said an I left it to him, he would see he stayed behind; adding it were well he should know no father but me and that I must aid him and make of him a great prelate, which would one day be of great service to my house.

Margaret then proposed that Giulio should go as far as Siena, on which "the Cardinal who was present said: 'I will e'en go with your Excellency, and when I leave you, you shall hand him over to me and I will take him back to Florence.'" However, it would seem that Cybò only went as far as Poggibonsi with the Duchess and her great escort, leaving Giulio to come with a trusted servant from Siena. Cosimo himself visited Margaret at Prato on her journey:

"Thus," he continues, "I left Prato and came to Florence, and there bade my mother set in order certain rooms for him (Giulio) and then

<sup>1</sup> Firenze, Archivio di Stato, Mediceo, Minute di lettere, filza 3.

I went, methinks to Poggio, to hunt, expecting when I returned to find him in my house....Julio reached Florence before the Cardinal and thus they [the servants] took him to my mother, and he stayed there to dine with her. My mother thought, according to what I had said to her, that he was to stay there in the house, and said: 'You may be going, for servants for Julio are not lacking.' Then said the Cardinal's man: 'I have orders from the Cardinal not to leave him, and to take him to sleep at his house.' My mother thought the man was over-zealous and said to him: 'As you have orders from the Cardinal, e'en take him'; thinking that, since the Cardinal was returning shortly, he would send him back as was agreed. Thus the Cardinal returned, and none the less did not send back Julio nor speak thereof."

Cosimo was much surprised by this, but, following the advice of Campana, waited awhile, expecting that Cybò would soon weary of looking after a child. But next came word of how Giulio was being flattered—"so that it could not be otherwise even were his father alive, for it is: 'your servant' here, and 'your servant' there, and 'oh if Vostra Signoria were but older!'" Upon this Campana wished the Duke to send for him at once, but Cosimo prudently replied:

Do not so, for when he (Giulio) comes here, they look at him as if we were fain to poison him; you know the boy is nowise strong, and if by ill hap he died in our hands, God alone could persuade them we had not had him poisoned<sup>1</sup>.

On these events there followed the imprisonment and examination of a certain Biagio Pesci di Campana, said to be the man hired to poison Giulio. The Cardinal desired that he should be handed over to the Spanish castellan, but Cosimo preferred to have him examined on his own account. What exactly was revealed was never made public, but the general conviction was that, not the Duke, but the Cardinal was inculpated by Biagio's confession. Guicciardini, who was present at the trial, observed that "it was not well to write the particulars, all the more, since the matter ended in the

<sup>1</sup> Ferrai, *op. cit.* pp. 290-292.

full justification of the Duke<sup>1.</sup>" Cosimo with reason wrote to Bandini:

If I were what I make bold to say I am not, a thousand times they would have made me despair, for what I have written to you is not a fourth part of the ill deeds and treacherous acts that they have practised in the past and will practise in future (che mi hanno facto, fanno et faranno ogni giorno)<sup>2</sup>.

There was indeed no doubt that Cybò had repeatedly betrayed the Duke's confidence and now, in his disappointment at being no longer privy to his designs, was at least cognisant of the intrigues against him. When in Rome Cybò frequented the house of his sister-in-law the Marchesana of Massa, Ricciarda Malaspina, always a centre of plots to the detriment of Cosimo, and to her Cosimo knew Cybò had revealed secret information. "My ambassador" (in Rome), he told Bandini, "wrote to me that no one could open his lips in my house...but it was known there almost before the words were spoken," and he had found that the delinquent was Cybò. The Marchesana was a persistent enemy to the Duke:

Every intrigue and plot that was evolved by the Farnesi, by Cardinal Ridolfi, by Aghilar, everything that was secretly planned in Italy or abroad, Ricciarda sought to find out, to make all known to her brother-in-law....In her dealings with the adversaries of the Duke, especially with Cardinal Ridolfi, she attempted by a thousand subtle turns and twists to enmesh Cosimo and make him suspect to his Majesty<sup>3</sup>.

Hence the Duke, aware of this, found his relations with Cybò increasingly strained and said angrily, "before there had been any ill feeling between Cardinal Cybò and me, this *puttana*" (so he rudely described the Marchesana) "was continually writing him mischievous words, filling him with a thousand suspicions."

<sup>1</sup> Ferrai, *op. cit.* p. 127.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 300.

<sup>3</sup> Luigi Staffetti, *Giulio Cybò Malaspina* (Modena, 1892), p. 33.

Now, however, the ambiguous affair of the little Giulio, added to Cosimo's mistrust of the Cardinal on other grounds, served well as a pretext for removing Cybò in the way suggested to him by Cardinal Granvelle, "dexterously," that is to say, "and in such wise that he might alienate and offend as little as possible<sup>1</sup>." I hasten to add that Giulio, far from dying prematurely, lived to be a commander in Cosimo's new order of Knights of S. Stefano and had no need to complain of neglect at the hands of his kinsman. Cosimo was merely concerned with his existence in these early days as showing him how many and how active were his enemies, chief among those in Italy being not only the Florentine exiles, but the Pope. So long as Pope Paul III lived, the Duke of Florence was never entirely at his ease, and with reason. Pier Luigi Farnese, Paul's son, lost no opportunity of profiting by any real or imaginary difficulty in which Cosimo might find himself and had before now tried to make himself master of Pisa. Next, Altopascio and Siena were a cause of misunderstanding between them, and if other matter for dispute had been lacking, difficulties over ecclesiastical exactions would have sufficiently embittered the Pope. He had once gone so far as to send papal troops into the territory of Cortona, but these were withdrawn by order of Charles V.

Enough has been said to make it clear that Cosimo had a dangerous and powerful enemy on his southern frontier, while, in the lifetime of Pope Paul III, Rome was a hot-bed of intrigue among the Florentine *fuorusciti*. And these, if they numbered many a well-known name, such as that of Bindo Altoviti, whose *palazzo* in Via de' Banchi was the haunt of connoisseurs, had also in their train less reputable associates, ready to betray for a given sum of ducats. Cosimo, therefore, already smarting from the refusal of Charles to give

<sup>1</sup> Ferrai, *op. cit.* p. 135.

him Margaret's hand in marriage, was doubly wounded by her being bestowed on one of a family so hostile to him. With her would go wealth and estates which he perhaps half looked on as his own, being Medici possessions, and with no little displeasure did he look forward to "haply seeing my goods in Casa Farnese<sup>1</sup>."

With not a friend to trust to beyond his mother and such faithful secretaries and envoys as Campana and Serristori—men nevertheless dependent on him and taking their orders from him—the young man, even now no more than twenty-one, had indeed a heavy weight on his shoulders. But Cosimo's was a character which adverse conditions toughened and strengthened; opposition rather spurred him on than rebuffed him. Whatever his motives—and no man has been accused of baseness and selfishness more than Cosimo—it was all to the benefit of Tuscany that, thanks to his diplomacy no less than his energy, his position grew stronger as years went on, and that Charles, conscious of services rendered him by the Duke of Florence and out of conceit with Paul III, agreed at last to hand over to him the fortresses of Florence and Livorno. By July 5th, 1543, Cosimo could draw a long breath of relief on finding himself free from visible Spanish authority and master of his frontiers<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Ferrai, *op. cit.* p. 143

<sup>2</sup> G. B. Cini gives the date on which the fortresses were ceded as June 11th, but I have followed modern writers in fixing it as July 5th.

## CHAPTER IV

### COSIMO'S MARRIAGE—COUNTRY LIFE—TRIBULATIONS OF THE SECRETARIES—COSIMO AND HIS FAMILY

We may now turn for a while from politics to the no less important domestic history of Duke Cosimo, glad with him to escape from the close atmosphere of cabinets and councils, from private and public conspiracies, from prisoners and exiles, into the free air of the villas and hill-sides where he doubtless passed some of his happiest hours. I think it well to devote some time to describing, as far as may be in detail, the home life of Cosimo, since calumny has been even busier with this than with his political misdeeds, in the hope that a study of contemporary letters and other writings may show that he was not so blameworthy, even towards his mother, as is commonly believed. As husband and father Cosimo is seen at his best, and this in an age when very few princes were noted for conjugal fidelity, while the annals of the Medici family offered him no very commendable examples.

Let us then go back to the year 1538 when, Margaret of Austria having been denied him, Charles V proposed as Cosimo's wife one of the daughters of Don Pedro de Toledo who, almost alone among Spanish governors, left behind him memories of a wise if a stern ruler. Adriani tells us that Don Pedro offered Cosimo the eldest of his four daughters, Isabella, but that he, being allowed to choose, fixed on Eleonora whom he had seen and admired on the occasion of his visit to Naples two years before<sup>1</sup>. Thus a pleasant touch of romance is given to a marriage which was a very happy one; we might search long in the archives of other Italian states before finding so united a pair as

<sup>1</sup> *Scritti vari...di G. B. Adriani..., Bologna, 1871, p. 19.*

Cosimo and Eleonora. For all his secrecy and self-reliance, the Duke not seldom took counsel with his wife. Her regular features and pleasing expression attract the eyes of a traveller in Florence, wearied by the varying degrees of ugliness or insipidity prevalent among the wives of the Medicean Dukes and, in spite of Spanish haughtiness and etiquette, Eleonora, in her earlier married years, showed a good deal of energy and enjoyment of life.

Galluzzi tells us that Eleonora was not on the best of terms with her mother-in-law, an all too common occurrence, but that there was, as some modern writers say, any real breach between Maria Salviati and either her son or his wife, does not appear to be borne out by facts. Maria at least did her part in welcoming the bride and, though I have come on no record of her feelings, was no doubt keenly alive to the gains and losses likely to be caused by this marriage. For there were two aspects of the matter, and while Eleonora brought Cosimo the wealth and support of which he had immediate need<sup>1</sup>, his choice of a wife added to his own enemies those of his father-in-law. In especial, Del Vasto, d'Aguilar and Don Giovanni de Luna did what they could to embarrass the Duke, the one sending troops to quarters in Tuscany and supporting the Lucchesi in their raids, while the others lost no opportunity of fanning Pope Paul's already hot resentment, or of quenching any awakening kindness towards Cosimo in the mind of the Emperor<sup>2</sup>. Maria Salviati was ever keenly alive to her son's interests, and up to now at least by no means unacquainted with passing events. Thus she may well have had misgivings as to the advisability of this match and her Florentine soul would not be likely enthusiastically to welcome

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Young, *The Medici*, vol. II. p. 286.

<sup>2</sup> M. Lupo Gentile, *Paolo III, nella sua relazione colla Corte Medicea* (Sarzana, 1906), p. 37.

a Spanish daughter-in-law. Be this as it may, she was now, with Cosimo, busily engaged in preparations for the wedding, and the letters quoted in this chapter show that there is some reason for dissenting from the statement that there was ever a complete estrangement between Cosimo and his mother:

"From the time that he became Duke," we read, "he never went near her, and she suffered many things from his harsh and unlovely disposition. On her son becoming head of Florence, she removed from Trebbia (*sic*) to the villa at Castello where her husband had lived as a boy, seldom seeing anyone<sup>1</sup>."

This suggests that Maria showed her sense of estrangement by moving nearer to Florence instead of further from it, as one would have expected. But, as the reader may remember, she had been in Florence at the time of her son's election, and a letter written in October of that year shows her to have been, not at either of the retired villas, but at Pisa, intending shortly to return to Florence:

"Truly," she writes, "it was our wish to return this morning... but the sickness of the Signora Luisa hath delayed us; she is now somewhat better; we will see how it is to-day and to-morrow... and on Tuesday if there be no new delay we will set out on our way, and so great is my desire to see you that it seems to us we have been away, not days but months...<sup>2</sup>."

The episode of the little Giulio proves that Maria was in Florence in 1538, and there we still find her on the occasion of Cosimo's marriage in 1539. The instructions given by the Duke to his envoy in Naples as to the preparations for Eleonora's reception point to careful consideration of his mother's dignity. Comparisons were drawn between the arrangements made for greeting Duke Alessandro's bride and those now on foot, and Cosimo was insistent on the difference in the two

<sup>1</sup> Young, *op. cit* vol II p 235.

<sup>2</sup> Firenze, *Arch di Stato, Mediceo Carteggio* di M. Salviati, letter to P. F. Riccio, Oct 21st, 1537.

cases. Alessandro, he said, had no mother nor kinswoman of rank to receive his wife, whereas:

meseemeth that, I having the Signora my mother, of that quality which is well known to you and to all, should there be so great a number of ladies as I see in your note, Sua Signoria would thereby be altogether excluded, and somewhat slighted, and that this plan hath been drawn up as if the Signora Duchessa were being brought to a spot where there was lacking, not only such a lady, but indeed anyone who could have or could await any office such as the care and guidance of her Excellency. And since this, in many respects, is of import, it behoves that the Signori yonder should reflect that here is the aforesaid lady, my mother, who is awaiting with the greatest longing the Signora Duchessa and already loves her to that degree that she will serve her and show her respect with such affection as I am persuaded the Signora Duchessa will hold herself duly served and satisfied, in such wise that she will not be able to conceive, much less desire, she should do more<sup>1</sup>.

Cosimo was a man of detail and goes on to give careful directions as to the number of ladies in waiting Eleonora was to bring with her:

so many (do they propose) that methinks there can be no intention of adding some of those that I had designed for such service, for that the bride would be so costly that 'twould be unbearable, and the precedent I spoke of [that of Duchess Margaret] would be exceeded by far<sup>2</sup>.

But of Eleonora's arrival he had little of interest to report to his father-in-law, merely announcing to Don Pedro:

At the 22nd hour of the present day arrived the Signora Duchessa with all her escort at Livorno and, God be praised, in all safety, having felt no discomfort nor distress from the journey or from the sea. Whereat I was content and joyous as your Excellency will suppose, without great need of words of mine, there being nought in the world more desired and longed for by me....The Signora Duchessa and I have now come here to il Poggio, a spot near the city, where we shall rest until Sunday which will be the day of her Excellency's entry into Florence<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Firenze, *Arch. di Stato, Mediceo, Minute di lettere*, filza 2 (March 10th, 1538 s.f.).

<sup>2</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, June 27th, 1539.

On the same day he writes more warmly to his mother-in-law:

"I am well assured that your Excellency must feel deeply the departure of the Signora Duchessa, for this is consonant with maternal love, yet now meseemeth I better understand it, as I grow acquainted with the qualities of this lady and the charm of her conversation. Yet," he concludes with masculine philosophy, "since women are born to this lot that they do not live in those houses wherein they are born, nor with those who gave them birth, I am confident your Excellency will strive to set over against your grief, the content and well-being of the Signora Duchessa."

Pier Francesco Riccio, now Major-domo, whose correspondence supplies much material for these years, gives us the details of Eleonora's entry into Florence on June 29th. She was dressed "in a gown of purple velvet broidered with gold, a golden coif on her head, and about her neck the ornament given her by the Signor Duca; the diamond on her finger; thereat the Spaniards were well satisfied."

More description of formal ceremonies might be given, but one such solemn entry is much like another and it is perhaps preferable to give instead some account of Cosimo's pastimes in these best years of his life, when Eleonora shared his hopes and rejoiced in his growing prestige, before the increasing pressure of political events and still more the death of his favourite sons (soon followed by that of their mother) combined to cast a gloom over his spirit.

And first we may consider Cosimo's appearance. At the time of his marriage he was just twenty, a tall muscular figure:

"his hair yellow and curly," writes an old author, "his face in youth most fair (while he throughout his life was of an admirable dignity) of bright colouring, his mouth somewhat full,...his eyes large and keen, his forehead wide, his beard thick...his hands most delicate. His step was rapid<sup>1</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> *Ricordi intorno ai costumi, azioni e governo del Serenissimo Gran Duca Cosimo I scritti da Domenico Mellini* (edited with notes by D. Moreni), p. 1, note (Firenze, 1820)

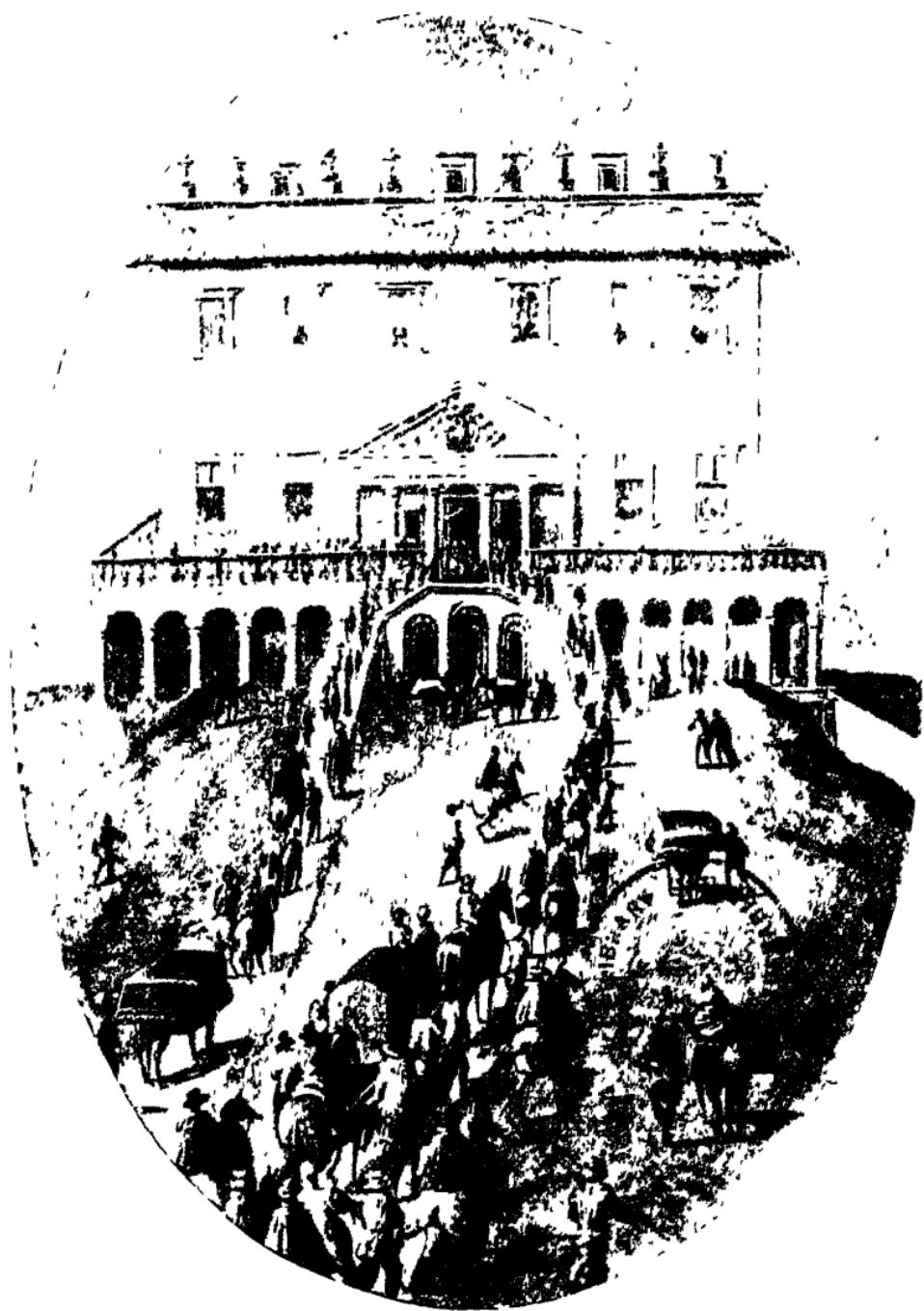
His voice, we learn, was not strong, but clear and sweet, and the glance of his eye could strike terror. In his early years he dressed *alla Fiorentina* in doublet and cloak, something after the Spanish fashion. After his marriage, he always wore buff or grey clothes (and so continued thenceforward)—but with variations, to judge from other descriptions: “He was wont to don a garment like a pleated jerkin,” goes on our author, “with over it a cloak *alla Francesca*, reaching to the knees; long hose and breeches of Lucchesino<sup>1</sup>; his cap of black velvet and shoes of the same; all his dress richly broidered with gold<sup>2</sup>. ”

An old inventory gives details also as to black and crimson doublets, while it is comforting to think that all winter garments were warmly lined with fur; long robes *all' Ungheresca*, of sables; short cloaks with cuffs and collars of sable; even the boots lined with vair<sup>3</sup>. We can picture the young Duke and Duchess setting out for the chase some fine autumn morning. The Duke would wear a doublet of grey satin, unless the weather were cool enough for a more serviceable leather jerkin, gold laced, or one of doeskin, silk-embroidered, over it the cloak *alla Francesca* to protect him from the crisp air, high boots of Cordovan leather meeting the red breeches. On his curly hair would be the black velvet cap, likely enough with some jewelled brooch set in it, ornamented with one of his devices, such as the three diamond rings entwined, with the proud motto *Superabo*. Eleonora would be at his side, mounted on her favourite horse, and doubtless glad to escape from the cramping litter in which she had arrived at the villa, but not so preoccupied that she had not a watchful eye for the

<sup>1</sup> This was a special shade of red, much prized in old days.

<sup>2</sup> Mellini, *op. cit.* p. 2

<sup>3</sup> *La Prima Reggia di Cosimo I de' Medici...*, C. Conti (Firenze, 1893). This book with its reconstruction, so to say, of Palazzo Vecchio, gives much interesting and picturesque information.



Giorgio Vasari

POGGIO A CAIANO, ELEONORA IN HER LITTER

From a picture in the Palazzo Vecchio

Photo Brogi



purple-capped page who held her hound in leash, or the falconer who stood awaiting final orders. For Cosimo, even in his amusements, observed secrecy and few of his household ever knew what would be demanded of them from day to day. But, leaving conjectures to more skilful pens, I will quote from some of the many letters written by secretaries and servants of the Duke—Ugolino Grifoni, Lorenzo and Christiano Pagni and others—to Riccio the Major-domo. Lorenzo Pagni, who now and then varied service about the court by a diplomatic mission, has often a touch which brings the past vividly before our eyes. Thanks to him we can realise a little the outward pomp and extreme domestic discomfort of those days, yet even so it is no gloomy picture which these letters reveal.

Of villas and country houses there was no lack, from that of il Trebbio, associated so much with Cosimo's boy-

1539-41      hood, to those of Castello and Poggio a Caiano, where the artists of the day devoted their ingenuity to devising fresh attractions for the gardens, as Vasari tells at length. Il Trebbio was a "fortress-like" building and round it stretched thick woods, while Poggio a Caiano (designed by Giuliano da San Gallo) with a wide staircase leading to its stately porch, had more of artistic pretension. Further afield, Cerreto, Lecceto, Montelupo were simpler buildings, but all solid and four-square with a certain dignity, and all in pleasant surroundings of hills, some bare and rocky, but for the most part wooded and chosen always with a view to sport. Sometimes it was in the wide valley of the Mugello that the court lingered, at il Trebbio or in the confiscated villa once Lorenzino's, at Cafagiolo; sometimes on the slopes of the Pistoiese hills, where in wet weather rushing torrents foam under high-arched ancient bridges; sometimes in the more open, fertile country towards Empoli at Cerreto or Montelupo

where, in after years, Isabella, Cosimo's favourite daughter, came to her tragic fate.

For the rest, the conditions of life during these country jaunts are feelingly described by the secretaries, whose enjoyment was more chequered than that of their master and mistress. Ugolino Grifoni, in the early days of such expeditions, ruefully complained to Riccio :

. . Of going to il Poggio, *verbum nullum*, and God knows if I long for it, it being impossible I could be so ill off there as not to be better off than I am here. Where, up to the present, there is no lodging, so that I judge to-night I shall be fain to chant *Domini est terra*<sup>1</sup>.

Lorenzo Pagni writes, a year or two later, in the same vein : This morning their Excellencies were at the chase until about the XVI. hour, and now are in their rooms at their pleasure, and alone; that is without any prelates; only Rosso and Bernardone are amusing them<sup>2</sup>....Written from il Poggio, where I am worse off than ever I was, for last night Vincentio Marzi slept in my bed, and 'twas no good action but a right knavish one; but he must needs sit at dinner and be at Monsignore's elbow and teach me manners forsooth: and as for me, I must e'en send for a little bed and sleep there, as I have done before...the XVI. July, 1541.

While Pietro Camaiani, another of the company, had written shortly before :

...As for me, *poverello*, I slept last night on a bench with my cloak and nought else—if there had but been a little straw! So that to-day I am all undone.

It was the age of practical jokes no less than of discomforts, and the Duke's household evidently much enjoyed the following trick played on the prelates, who, it would seem, were none too popular :

"As Vostra Signoria knows," wrote Lorenzo, "these Bishops are ever curious to learn beforehand what his Excellency desires to do.

<sup>1</sup> For this and the following letters, from secretaries, *vide* Firenze, *Archivio di Stato, Mediceo, Carteggio dei segretari*, filze 1169, 1170, 1171, 1172, *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> These may have been two of the dwarfs so dear to Cinquecento princes.

Yesterday, the sun being hidden and the weather tolerably cool, his Excellency, with intent to go hunting, dined early and said that he desired to go riding. Whereon the Bishops and one or two others were burning to know whether he proposed to ride, and therefore his Excellency and the Major-domo resolved to play them a trick and announced that his Excellency designed to go hunting beyond the hills that are towards Civita, and to lie last evening at Stabbia, going thence this morning to Pistoia. And on this the Major-domo . . . had some of the mules loaded, taking care to pack their Excellencies' bed. Seeing this, there was the greatest noise and uproar in the world among the Bishops and gentlemen, and each had his goods packed and sent towards Stabbia . . . and their Excellencies, when the chase was ended, returned to il Poggio, saying it was too late to go to Stabbia and began to laugh and jest over these curious folk who had neither beds nor baggage . . . ”

Another touch is added by the dismay of the courier who had ostensibly been sent on in advance. The bishops supposed him to have been sent to Stabbia, but instead he had been shut up in a garret by the Major-domo, and spent several terrified hours, persuaded he had offended the Duke and “thinking over all he had done and said since he entered his Excellency's service.” His alarm was increased on his seeing below his window two Lanzi who, he was convinced, were keeping guard over him. All the evening there was talk and laughter over this exquisite jest:

and their Excellencies are waxing fat, and, God bless them, are fresh and well-liking and fresh coloured like roses . . . Dal Poggio, July 11th, 1541.

Pagni was not so well pleased when the joke was at his expense:

“This morning,” he writes, “the Duke went to see the nets spread for the birds, and took several bullfinches, and made one of them bite me so that it hurt me right smartly, and 'twas the right hand. The others say it was a great favour, but to me it seems great pain.”

One may feel sure that, whether it was a question of a nipped finger or of an uneasy bed, Lorenzo would not fail to make the most of it. He was by no means pleased

when despatches arrived at unseasonable hours, as would appear from the following letter:

Vostra Signoria has indeed made a good return for the merry tale I wrote yesterday, by twice breaking my sleep this past night; a thousand thousand million thanks therefor....I forgive you, since, as their Excellencies slept until the fourteenth hour, I have had time to take exercise in this charming spot, and then to swallow a glass of Trebbiano, with a *berlingozzo*<sup>1</sup> wherewith to cure the Indigestion of this past night.

On another occasion we have a picture of Cosimo on board ship: with him went a nephew of Riccio's as page, who thus, in rather a laboured style, relates the events of the journey:

... I have set about writing this to give you news of our general well-being and in particular that of our illustrissimo Signor Patrone .... Vostra Signoria, I know, will have heard that we embarked on Sunday at Lerici [or allerici as the page puts it] which was the 28th of August, and I went in the galley where was his Excellency. Nor need I tell you what rejoicing there was, what blowing of trumpets and firing of guns and shouts of the people, most joyous to hear. But a little distance from the land, the sea began to molest not a few of the gentlemen who were with his Excellency, all of them being more or less ill bestead, and even his Excellency, like a prudent steward, twice paid what was due. But for the rest, the time passed merrily what with gaming and pleasantries until evening when we disembarked at Sestri; his Excellency's galley alone, that is, for the others stayed at sea; and the next day at dawn...the men bent to the oars and we reached Genoa at the hour of dinner, the sea again vexing those unaccustomed to it. And the Signor Principe [D'Oria] came to meet his Excellency at the harbour, accompanying him to his lodging in Palazzo D'Oria with all honour. Where having rested somewhat, they set about dining, and the same day his Excellency went to visit the Signor Principe, and thus every morning either on foot or on horseback he goes with all his retinue, seeing now this, now that, and we pages ever follow him and serve him as is our duty.... Di Genova, addì primo di settembre 1541, Vostro Nipote Franc<sup>o</sup> paggio.

The letters of 1542 and 1543 from Pagni and Camaiani may perhaps be quoted more continuously,

<sup>1</sup> A large round cake.

as they serve to bring out something of the lighter side of Cosimo's life:

"Yesterday evening," writes Pagni, "there was great good cheer at il Trebbio, and the wines and the water were so cold that they lay heavy on most stomachs...and this morning, for all that the beds were none too soft, everyone slept until the first hour of the day, when his Excellency, who was the soonest astir, had the trumpet sounded, and without any hounds or hawks with him went off to Scarperia, to see the ruins there, and the Signor Stefano...counselled his Excellency not to seek another site, pointing out that this could be strongly fortified, and thus the inhabitants have been bidden to build a wall on this same spot at their convenience, with intent to make a strong circle of walls securely buttressed....His Excellency returned early to Cafaggiuolo, and we dined here and now orders have been given to go a-fishing and to lodge here at Cafaggiuolo this night." (August 5th, 1542.)

"Their Excellencies," reports Pietro Camaiani the following month, "have but now ridden toward li Monti, to devote all the day to the chase so that provisions for dining in the country have been taken along and they will not be back before dark. They are both of them vigorous and in good humour, and the Duchess was never so fair nor so gay....The Duke, the greater part of the time, is busied I know not wherewith, save that our Pasquino is concerned therein, and is in high favour, and all this morning I have heard nought but cries of Pasquino here and Pasquino there!" (Sep. 20th, 1542.)

In November Pagni dismally dated a letter from Cerreto "where the wind blows harder than in any other place in the world," but this seemed not to affect the Duke and Duchess, for later the same day he writes:

Yesterday there were killed five boars and two roebucks, one of which boars killed the Duchess' favourite hound and wounded and mauled many more. The chase ended, towards evening, their Excellencies came here to Montelupo, in the best spirits in the world....

Next evening their humour was less gay, but they were soon diverted:

"Pasquino's letter," writes Pagni, "was so grateful to their Excellencies that, whereas a little before they had been as it were wearied and keeping silence in no good temper, as soon as they

had seen it, they began to laugh with one another, and with the jesters or chatterboxes as I might call them—Franceschino, Martino and Navarro, so that all the evening there was continual merriment, and all who stood round had their share of mockery from the said jesters...and amid much laughter their Excellencies went to bed, having first given the order for a fine day's sport on the morrow at Stabbia, with intent to take boars and pheasants and partridges, in honour of the Signor Don Giovanni and his Falcon. And I, whilst they are at the chase, shall go to my property of S. Gregorio, to make ready for grafting and set in order the paths in the vineyard as I did to-day when their Excellencies went (as I said they intended) to visit the mine of Monte Vittolini...." (Cerreto, Nov. 2nd, 1542.)

A little later the court moved down to the sea-coast and fishing was added to fowling and hunting, as Camaiani reports, adding:

Since we left Pisa, the weather has been so fair that none could desire better, and the Duke is well content and this morning hath gone hunting, as he will every day while the weather is so good. And this he said this morning in my presence to Signor Pasquier, to whom he also said that he was come to Livorno to stay there at least four days; and this I was fain to tell Vostra Signoria, since on this journey we have never known one day what there would be to do the next, his Excellency being more than ever secret in the matter of whither he is riding....We take pleasure in the fair view we have of the sea, which is very calm.... (Livorno, Dec. 1st, 1542.)

Cosimo's secretaries were far from sharing his energy when it was a question of climbing heights, and this same autumn of 1542 Camaiani writes from Pietrasanta:

.... The Duke spent all yesterday at the mines, where whoso goes has need to look to his footing. For this cause the Duchess and Campana who had started along the same way, did not mount the hill, but instead spent the day on the sea.

The chief aim of all the expeditions, however, was sport, and so passionately did Cosimo love it that, remembering how some of his contemporaries neglected everything for its sake, we are the more struck by his persistent resolution to devote himself first of all to affairs of state. A few extracts may be given from the



A PORCELAIN HUNTING  
SCENE



references to hunting and hawking, which give a breath of autumn air to many of these letters<sup>1</sup>.

"I am like a falcon ready to pounce," Cosimo wrote one day, when hunting was impossible, "the weather is vile, 'tis as cold as January and these neighbouring hills are full of snow<sup>2</sup>."

And Pagni's letters of the autumn of 1546 give us several pictures of pleasant hours:

"The weather," he tells Pier Francesco Riccio, "which Vostra Signoria says has been so unfavourable with you, was the same here until the hour of dinner, but to-day hath been fine and clear, so much so that their Excellencies, as soon as they had dined, went to la Pavoniera where they had the nets spread and to their great satisfaction took sixty birds, what with thrushes and blackbirds and about twenty or twenty-five redbreasts and other small birds, and returned full late to il Poggio."

The English reader will have nothing but pity for the redbreasts, blackbirds and thrushes, and will wonder that the taste for bigger game left any interest in such petty sport, which however served the Italian well enough when uncertain weather or lack of time prevented more serious expeditions<sup>3</sup>.

To turn, however, to more exciting game:

"God be thanked," writes Vincenzo Ferreri, another of Riccio's correspondents, "to-day his Excellency has had the finest day's hunting ever seen and had the greatest pleasure he has had for some

<sup>1</sup> Signor Conti gives some details as to the manner of hunting, prevalent at this time. Boars, stags, does and roebucks were usually started by hounds and then the hunters, closing in, attacked them with javelins and spears and arquebuses. With birds, the arquebus was not popular and more often the crossbow, or ordinary bow, was used.

<sup>2</sup> Conti, *op. cit.* p. 232

<sup>3</sup> If we may trust old Florentine tapestries, there was also hunting of porcupines, but it is difficult to find any trace of such animals except in Southern Italy, so that this possibly represents only a flight of fancy. The tapestries in general give the quaintest and most realistic caricatures of different kinds of sport, and the huntsmen's gay red and blue and buff tunics add a pleasant touch of colour to the scenes.

time past in the chase, and has killed ten wild boars, six large and four small and without nets, so that he is as well satisfied as possible." (Nov. 6th, 1546.)

Two days later there was an accident which spoilt the pleasure of the sport:

".... To-day," writes Lorenzo Pagni, "their Excellencies have been hunting not far from Empoli, and killed two large boars and two small ones, and one of the large ones injured almost as many hounds as his Excellency had, and all the court as well, and among others, his Excellency's good hound was twice gashed in the throat and 'tis not thought he will live. And likewise the poor Gianandrea (*sic*) Strozziere dismounted with a falcon on his wrist, and got entangled with his spurs and fell head foremost on the stones and wounded himself on the head in two places and also on the temples. And since the fall he hath not spoken and hath vomited food and much blood, and by order of his Excellency hath been carried to Empoli. His Excellency is greatly moved by the death of the poor fellow which, 'tis thought, must certainly follow. Nor was his pleasure in hunting so great as is his grief for this mishap." (Nov. 8th, 1546.)

Next day, however, there was more cheerful news, to the effect that Giannandrea:

who...was taken for dead, is nowise gravely injured. Which hath been such good hearing to his Excellency as words fail me to tell, and on hearing this grateful news he resolved to go and enjoy the rest of this pleasant day, clear and serene as it is, going towards the Cascine<sup>1</sup> and Pavoniere. 'Tis held certain by all this court that to-morrow we shall go to Cerreto, and all the more 'tis thought, since we have no hounds left us for boar-hunting, and that his Excellency may pass the time for two or three days on the slopes of Cerreto with greyhounds for coursing hares, and with falcons and setters for pheasants and partridges. (Nov. 9th, 1546.)

Lorenzo the next month had reason to wish himself back at il Poggio, writing dolefully from Scarperia on his way to Venice whither against his will he had been sent:

...I have halted here this evening lest I should die to-night of cold and hunger, did I mount higher...I learn that from hence the journey will be grievous, what with ice and snow, and to-day for my consolation, it hath snowed all day on this hill top. (Dec. 18th, 1546.)

<sup>1</sup> These were the dairy farms, near il Poggio, where there were sheep, cows and pigs, as well as a rabbit-warren and an aviary.

Life in fact was not all hunting and clear weather, and when we come to the subject of clothing and provisioning the court in their nomadic existence, it will be seen that the Italian of the Cinquecento was not less dilatory and at times unreliable than his modern compatriot.

One knows not whom to pity the more—the secretaries who served as a vent for their master's ill-humour, or the luckless Major-domo, who was for ever urged to hurry the despatch of goods, or objurgated if they were found unsatisfactory. And the wants of the court were many, as the following letters will show:

"....The Duchessa," writes Pietro Camaiani, "has received by my own hand the two pair of red velvet shoes and the strips of black silk, which is to her liking and she hath commended all. Now she does but wait for this blessed gown, and the cloaks which are greatly desired, and every day I am reminded thereof at least twice by the aforesaid Signora Duchessa.... The Duke said to me of the Duchessa's velvet shoes that if Vostra Signoria had had a gold cross embroidered on them, they would have been shoes fit for the Pope." (Pisa, Dec. 7th, 1542.)

Another more urgent letter says:

....This morning Madonna Chaterina (*sic*) Tornabuoni said to me that yester evening the aforesaid Signora Duchessa complained greatly that nothing is ever sent to her from Florence that she asks for, or else the delay is so great that when it comes 'tis no longer needed...and that this seemed to her nowise right....She complained moreover that il Contino [possibly one of the dwarfs] is so ill used that he has neither hose nor doublet and is dying of cold, and his Excellency too, since he hath not yet been able to have his robe nor mantle....The said Madonna Chaterina bid me write telling Vostra Signoria *at once* to order that a pair of narrow sleeves should be made for the Signora Duchessa, of crimson satin and lined with soft, delicate skins, such as those Messer Agostino hath made before, and these sleeves her Excellency desires to wear under her other sleeves. (Livorno, Dec. 3rd, 1542.)

As for the Duke, he ordered gay doublets of red and crimson satin, and scarlet hose, as if he had tired of

greys and buffs, and it was little use to send him anything but the best quality of stuff, for indignant letters would come to the Major-domo. His Excellency found the cloth too thick and poorly woven, or again not soft and flexible as he had wished, while at another time it would be the Duchess who had an eye to her husband's needs and also spoke with vigour:

"The Signora Duchessa," writes Lorenzo Pagni, "as she was entering her litter to go into the country with the Duca mio Signore (notwithstanding that yesterday they and many others of the court were mired and drenched in the marshy ground) bade me write, ordering you to send here without delay his Excellency's cloak and doublet...and to bid Messer Carlo Pheo at once to have made for his Excellency two pair of leathern hose, but not miserably short and tight like the others, which his Excellency has not been able to wear." (Pisa, Nov. 11th, 1542.)

Not only did clothes sometimes run short, but occasionally Pagni or Camaiani sent passionate entreaties for such necessaries as "balls of soap," and above all for ink, while once Pagni writes in desperation:

Thanks to Messer Agnolo Divizi we are here without a sheet of paper, and what is worse, with no ledger....I pray Vostra Signoria to send one, and paper, string and sealing wax without delay, for I am abashed and fear I may need to blush for his carelessness....(Poggio, Aug. 13th, 1543.)

Now and then there were difficulties over getting fresh food, and occasional offerings of delicacies are usually dwelt on as if with great enjoyment. An indignant note to the hapless Major-domo tells how:

up to the present, the salted fish from Spain, such as the Ill<sup>ma</sup> Duchessa likes, has not yet come...all that has reached us is some fish that is stale and broken, nor did I think fit to take it for her Excellency....

More often, however, comes such an entry as the following:

I have received a letter from Vostra Signoria, with a great basket of peaches, which at the supper hour I offered to their Excellencies

... who were well pleased to see such fine ones and began therewith to eat them, declaring they had never eaten better in their lives, and so said those gentlemen who tasted them....

Or again:

As their Excellencies were a-dining...with Messer Simone and other doctors and Monsignori the Bishops, all very gay, at the fruit course there appeared one...with an osier basket addressed to me. I knew from the smell what was in it, and without delay set them before their Excellencies, and said Vostra Signoria kissed their Excellencies' hands and had sent a basket of truffles. Their Excellencies, full of merriment, both began to laugh and drew out three, and the Signora Duchessa had the basket put in her chamber for safety, but desired that Mastro Simone should have two. They were not large, but gave such a good smell as I never saw better (gettava uno hodor che non si vide mai meglio)....

Cosimo was no lenient master, and few details were too trivial for his attention, down to pages' caps, which "should be of purple velvet, for the scarlet caps are not convenient for the summer." Greater interest he took in his sons' wardrobe. "The Duca mio Signore is not content," writes Pagni, "that the Signor Don Francesco<sup>1</sup> should wear these velvet doublets at present"; and again:

I received the doublet of red satin for his Excellency and the cap with the strings, which have been given to Barbetta, and to the nurse have been handed the points and the white broidery for the Signor Don Francesco.

The Signor Don Francesco wore out his clothes fast, so that he appears in a lamentable state:

It behoves Vostra Signoria to order yet three more pair of hose for the Signor Don Francesco, for in truth he has no more than three pair, all of them torn, and no one will take on themselves to send for them, for they have spoken thereof to the Duchess and she hath not answered, and Madonna Caterina and the nurse say that the hose of the Signor Don Giovanni are short by two inches, and the doublet is three inches too long, and therefore make it known to whoso had the making of them.... (Pisa, May 20th, 1546.)

<sup>1</sup> The eldest son.

A few days after the Duchess must have answered to good purpose, and Don Francesco was promptly provided for:

"The Duca mio Signore and the Duchessa," writes Vincenzo Ferreri, "have bid me write to Vostra Signoria that you have made for the Signor Don Francesco one pair of hose, one doublet and a robe of crimson and white, and all speedily and at once.... The hose of the Signor Don Francesco have arrived, and the dress for the Duchessa, who exclaimed that it had come all crushed, and folded so badly as was never seen, and she says it must be handed to M. Agostino and that he should be reproved for that he has sent anything of hers in such a state. See therefore that you rebuke whoso has deserved it." (Pisa, May 23rd, 1546.)

By this time there were several *illustriſſimi figli* to delight their father and mother; yet before we turn 1543 to them this would seem the place for a reference to a natural child of Cosimo's, of whom there is little trace, but whose birth may perhaps date from the days at il Trebbio when neither mother nor tutor had an eye to the youth. This child, named Bia, was later (like Giulio and Giulia<sup>1</sup>) brought up as a matter of course with the family, but died soon after Cosimo's marriage. Maria Salviati writes of her to Ugolino Grifoni:

There is nothing new in Bia's being the delight of the court, or that her like is not often found, for we too miss her, so loving she is; but to content his Excellency we are satisfied, and all the more as she is well and in good heart, we marvelling that the discomfort of the journey had not made her ill.

Bia, in fact, had gone with Cosimo and Eleonora to Arezzo, though travelling in those days was no easy matter. However, Cosimo's family grew used to moving about. But in this case, as so often happened when none but the most robust children survived the hardships and injudicious treatment then prevalent, Bia

<sup>1</sup> Natural children of Alessandro.

succumbed before long to fever. "Bia has slight fever," writes Riccio, "and Julia does well." And then a little later (February, 1541), "Bia does very ill, and the Signora (Maria) is grieved thereat as you can picture," with other references to an illness which ended in her death. On March 1st, 1541, the Florentine registers have the entry: "A daughter of the Illmo. Signor Duca Cosimo de' Medici, buried in San Lorenzo".<sup>1</sup>

Maria Salviati may have remembered the child for a time, but even she would soon forget her with the advent of the new babies, all of them sooner or later entrusted to her care, as the following letters show.

Maria, the eldest child, was born in 1540; then came Francesco, the heir, who little fulfilled his early promise; Isabella, destined for a tragic death, and Giovanni whose end, though less sad, was more untimely. References to them often occur as will now be seen and should serve further to bear out the statement that Maria Salviati in the later years of her life was not altogether separated from her son nor treated without consideration by him. And first we may quote a letter from Caterina Cybò (sister of the Cardinal) to Eleonora Gonzaga, Duchess of Urbino:

....I have no news from here and know nought of the palace, for since my first visit there I have not returned thither. The Signora Maria is, meseemeth, in very poor health, yet hath she great hope of recovery. The Signor Duca and the Duchessa are deeply in love, nor is one ever without the other. They all live in great pomp. The Signora Maria has her rooms adorned with fair blue leather hangings with but a touch of gold, and a bed of black taffeta. She is wont to wear bombazine of coarse black silk, and oft it seems as it were of plain camlet, without a pattern, and 'tis heavy, as if of wool, and by no means contents me. The children have their rooms hung with gold stamped leather and all, both legitimate and bastards<sup>2</sup>, are in the care of the Signora Maria.... (Firenze, July 8th, 1541<sup>3</sup>.)

<sup>1</sup> Conti, *op. cit.* pp. 120-122.

<sup>2</sup> *I e.* Giulio and Giulia, natural children of Alessandro

<sup>3</sup> Reumont, *Beiträge zur italienischen Geschichte*, vol. iv. p. 275 (Berlin, 1855)

Again, Ugolino Grifoni writes:

Coming here to Castello, I found his Excellency with the Signora Duchessa and the Signora Maria at Careggi, where they were passing the time in eating apples and pomegranates.... (Castello, Oct. 1st, 1539<sup>1</sup>.)

When Maria with the children was left at Castello or Florence during hunting expeditions there is constant mention of her and enquiry for her as well as for the babies:

"By your letter of the 3rd," writes Camaiani, "we have learnt of the visit made in the name of the Duchessa to the Illustrissima Signora Maria, and what you say in confirmation of the news that she does well and also the Ill<sup>ma</sup> Signori figluoli (*sic*), nor can I tell you how greatly content their Excellencies were thereat, and they laughed and rejoiced from their heart...." (Livorno, Dec. 4th, 1542.)

About a fortnight later the Duchess was concerned:

As I was this morning giving an account to the Duchessa mia Signora of the well-being of the Ill<sup>ma</sup> Signora Maria and of the Ill<sup>ma</sup> Signori figli, she ordered me that I should greet Sua Signoria Ill<sup>ma</sup> in the name of her Excellency and say that, as it has distressed her no little that Sua Signoria and the aforesaid Signori figli were now in Florence, where she knows the air is nowise good for them, so it has greatly contented her to learn of the resolve to go to the Badia di Fiesole, and she rejoices much that a healthy spot hath been found. Whence her Excellency urges the said Signora to go (and the sooner the better) to enjoy the said Badia. (Pisa, Dec. 18th, 1542.)

Or again we read:

The Signora Duchessa sends three partridges to the Signora Maria and begs that Vostra Signoria sees that she has them at the supper hour, not without adding her greetings<sup>2</sup>.

In fact, the ducal family was as much united as any other, and Maria had her special suite of rooms in the Palazzo Vecchio where the "Signor Duca had the apartment below, the Signora Maria that in the middle and her Excellency the one above<sup>3</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> Firenze, Arch. di Stato, Med., Carteggio dei Segretari, filza 1169.

<sup>2</sup> Conti, *op. cit.* p. 40

<sup>3</sup> Firenze, Arch. di Stato, Med., Carteggio *cit.*, filza 1169

During the spring of 1543 we have various letters which picture more clearly the home life in the various villas. These were written during Cosimo's absence at Genoa where he had gone to wait on the Emperor and whence he returned a free man with his fortresses restored to him. In his place Eleonora acted as regent and proved a wise governor, though easy to deal with she probably never was. She went with Cosimo as far as Pietrasanta, and from that place Ugolino Grifoni and Pagni wrote somewhat dissatisfied letters. While waiting for news of the arrival of Charles, Cosimo enquired into the workings of some mines near by which might, he hoped, yield silver:

"Urged by his Excellency's command," relates Grifoni, "I have been to the mines where I was like to leave not only my mule but my life; Vostra Signoria must imagine a stony journey, leading up to the sky with no clear path, and such that on either side one's eyes can scarce see the bottom of the precipice.... I would sooner post along the road to Genoa than creep up this one, for all the world like a snail. And, arrived at last up yonder, I saw nought but caverns, and these devils therein, labouring to extract this ore, which up to now hath profited us little, save for the hope had of it, no one having yet discovered the secret.... But I have taken pleasure in nought, so great was my hunger and discomfort.... (Pietrasanta, May 5th, 1543.)

Indeed, Grifoni must have found this toilsome day the climax to a disagreeable experience. He had already gloomily reported to Riccio:

.... The lodgings will be bad, since (for all they are near to the Palazzo of the Prince)<sup>1</sup> they are in a quarter inhabited by poor and squalid folk. May God grant to our patron that he keep his health, and to us, that we suffer as little as may be, for in truth, Messer Pierfrancesco mio, I am all dismayed by my present fatigue from the wearisome journey over yonder hateful mountains, while as consolation for these tribulations, we must make ready to chant the psalm: The Earth is the Lord's. [Grifoni seems to be fond of this laboured joke over the past or prospective lack of bedding.]

<sup>1</sup> *I e D'Oria.* The lodgings, no doubt, are those prepared for Cosimo at Genoa.

I know well that you and Signor Campana will laugh on reading this, and yet you will also be distressed at my distress.... (Pietrasanta, May 3rd, 1543.)

The court waited on at Pietrasanta with more or less impatience, Pagni writing on May 15th:

....His Majesty's arrival will be considerably later than was thought, and methinks their Excellencies would do well to return to Pisa, for that they would there be in greater comfort and both the Court and the horses would have enough to eat, whereas here they are dying of hunger. Moreover, the poor folk of this place could then attend to their affairs and see to their silkworms and their silk, which is their livelihood, and while the court is here they suffer no little....

However, on the 25th they were still waiting:

this blessed arrival of his Majesty at Genoa nor do I know when it will come about, so bad is the weather, and for my part I doubt we shall be abroad as late as San Giovanni<sup>1</sup>; and here we are put to great expense and infinite discomfort, both people and horses, whereof some are sick....

At last, however, the Emperor had landed and the Duke set off to meet him, leaving his secretaries to deal as best they could with the varying humours of the Duchess:

"At this moment," writes Pagni on May 28th, "hath appeared a messenger from Genoa, with letters in his Excellency's own hand... wherein he makes known his safe arrival in that city...and that la Maestà Cesarea had arrived there on Friday at an early hour. There were likewise letters from Monsignor di Maresco,...which, as they told of certain perils that had befallen his Excellency and his company, assuredly would have caused her (the Duchess) disturbance and fear, had she not first read the letter in the Duke's own hand, and even so she did not fail to sigh twice or thrice....Wherefore methinks (and so I have told Signor Campana)...that haply it were well, before her letter is given to the Ill<sup>ma</sup> Signora Maria, to say a word to her, as that his Excellency and his escort have had a bad journey, with some peril of falling, and that he should not describe it in such wise that she would be terrified, as if he had come near falling over a precipice; so that, advised of his safe arrival,...it may pass off with less disturbance...." (Pietrasanta, May 28th, 1543.)

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* S. John Baptist's Day, the great Florentine festival.

Shortly after, Pagni had difficulties with the Duchess whom he was accompanying home from Pietrasanta:

"The Duchessa," he tells Riccio, "approved of all, save that it seemed to her that Vostra Signoria had been gravely wanting, in that you did not first inform the Illustrissima Signora Maria of the advices received from Bologna, before you conferred with the Signori (of the Council), for she could have told you her opinion, and that you did so after these Signori of the Council had made their resolutions seemed to her blameworthy. She added, moreover, that Vostra Signoria had erred in not awaiting, or ever you consulted with any, what her Excellency might order; and on this she fell into a great anger, and, I excusing Vostra Signoria, and maintaining on my word that you had done all *ex cordis abundantia* (sic) she said these very words to me: 'Messer Pierfrancesco is a worthy man, and has great affection for his Excellency, but is of no great account in matters of business....'<sup>1</sup> At the nineteenth hour we think to leave here for San Miniato...." (Pisa, June 6th, 1543.)

The unfortunate Major-domo must have been specially maladroit on this occasion, for the same day Pagni wrote again:

I can assure Vostra Signoria that the letter you have written to the Signora Duchessa hath renewed her anger....She is moreover vexed that the Ill<sup>ma</sup> Signora (Maria) and the Ill<sup>mi</sup> Signori figli have been brought to Florence on the pretext of peril, since it seems to her impossible that there could be any at Castello, and she is persuaded that the matter will come to the ears of the citizens and haply of the exiles, who will make a mock of us and account us cowardly and fearful. Wherefore her Excellency purposes to go to-morrow to il Poggio and thence, the following morning, send one of her men to the Ill<sup>ma</sup> Signora Maria, begging her to come thither with the Ill<sup>mi</sup> Signori figli, and this will demonstrate that there hath been no cowardice nor fear on our part. (S. Miniato, June 6th, 1543.)

The promised letter was written next day and ran as follows:

Illustrissima Signora, Madre Osservandissima, I must tell Vostra Signoria with this present letter that I reached il Poggio this morning, and desire that it please you also to come hither with the Signori

<sup>1</sup> Pagni gives Eleonora's remark in Spanish "M. Pierfrancesco es un buon (sic) hombre, y mucho affectionado a S. Ex ma no es mucho considerado en los negocios"

figli, assuring Vostra Signoria that there is no danger in this place, nor any fear of unpleasing happenings, as some have imagined. I have not come to Florence, since I am wearied, both by my pregnancy, and by the absence of the Duca mio Signore. Therefore Vostra Signoria will do me no small pleasure in coming to stay here with me and bringing the children with you....La Duquesa di Florenza. (Poggio, June 7th, 1543.)

Eleonora indeed was far from happy in Cosimo's unwonted absence, as appears from the following letter of June 9th:

Thanks to Vostra Signoria, the Signora Duchessa, who, for that no letters had come from his Excellency, was beginning to fret and to despair, and had resolved not to sup and to sleep but little (as she had the night before), for joy of seeing his Excellency's own hand, supped with good will, revived in spirit and promised herself to sleep soundly this past night...all which is greatly to my content, for I was ill-pleased at her Excellency's too great distress.

Pagni and other responsible people were by no means so well assured of the safety of il Poggio as was Eleonora herself. The day before his last letter Pagni had written:

I am of opinion that Vostra Signoria should bring it about that Messer Octaviano [probably Ottaviano de' Medici] and Messer Ruberto come to-morrow to dine with her Excellency under colour of a visit, and by their words should persuade her to betake herself to Florence or, at the least, to Prato....And I see no other remedy, and like not this abode for her Excellency, since I am of opinion that it were easy to come by the Bolognese (road) most secretly as far as Montemurlo, and thence one night play us some trick....(il Poggio, June 8th, 1543.)

A month later Cosimo had returned and Eleonora's anxieties were over for the time being. The family was all together in the autumn and fragments of letters give a vivid picture of their doings:

"The Signor Duca," writes Pagni in September, "does excellently well, and this morning went where the fowling nets are spread and took the birds; then he dined with good appetite and now, at this twenty-first hour, has got into his coach and is gone to pass the time towards the Cascine; the Signora Duchessa is sleeping and resting; the Signora Maria is as usual. The Ill<sup>m</sup> Signori Don Francesco and Donna Maria are fair, ruddy and as fresh as roses, God bless them...."

Next month he reports:

The Duca mio Signore yesterday killed a large boar, and took seven pheasants, partridges and other game. Now he is taking his pleasure at the nets, and is within the little hut, well wrapped up lest the mist should offend him. The Duchess is fairly well recovered<sup>1</sup>, and is in her chamber, and Don Francesco and Donna Maria are her pastime. The new Signor Don Giovanni, fair and large as he is, looks like an Angel of Paradise.... (il Poggio, Oct. 10th, 1543.)

Don Giovanni was sufficiently precocious, since, three years later we hear: "The Signor Don Giovanni every day has a tale to tell, and can say the tale of the Fairy Morgana."

Besides the dancing of their dwarfs and the witticisms of their jesters, the Duke and Duchess, to pass the time on a wet day or of an evening, sometimes played a game of chance. Of gaming Eleonora was passionately fond, but the Duke, though he might join in the amusement, did so with less ardour:

"Yesterday," writes Christiano Pagni, "the day was passed in playing the game of three dice. In this took part the Signor Don Luigi<sup>2</sup> and Grimaldo and the Duke. Grimaldo lost about four hundred scudi, which were divided between the Signor Don Luigi and his Excellency...." Or again: "Our masters are passing the time merrily in playing *Centuno* with Don Francesco de Toledo<sup>3</sup>."

In such amusements, then, the Duke and Duchess prepared to spend the autumn of 1543, when, in October, Cosimo fell ill of fever and his secretaries and his womenfolk had no easy time of it. Business had to be put aside, and Pagni's almost daily letters are full of laments that everything is going to ruin:

".... And what is worse," he laments, "is that he will have everything his own way, so that the leech is in despair, and the Ill<sup>ma</sup> Signora his mother in still greater despair. And all the more since, yester evening, as she was exhorting him with motherly affection to behave differently, his Excellency spoke certain words which pierced her heart and she went weeping from the room, and though she

<sup>1</sup> Giovanni was only born on September 29th.

<sup>2</sup> Brother of Eleonora

<sup>3</sup> Uncle of Eleonora.

hath been there all the day, yet both of them have been as it were dumb....I asked his Excellency how the business that daily comes to hand was to be despatched, and he replied that it should all be done by the Duchessa mia Signora, who is most loth to agree to this and up to the present has not brought herself to do it. Vostra Signoria can therefore judge in what state I am...." (il Poggio, Oct. 26th, 1543.)

Distressing though it is that Cosimo should have shown such temper, the mere incident seems to point to a certain intimacy between mother and son, and Pagni's evident surprise at his master's behaviour suggests (let us hope) that it was rare. We have already had reason to think that Maria Salviati had a certain trick of irritating those she loved most. But without doubt Pagni was not the only one to feel relieved when (not till the end of November) he could report:

This morning his Excellency rose, looking better than his wont and with better appetite; had his head washed, dined and began to attend to business by himself...and now is with the Signor Valerio and talks of going into the garden.... (Castello, Nov. 25th, 1543.)

The court was still at Castello on December 3rd when we read:

This morning with great haste we left Castello for il Trebbio.... Their Excellencies are very well and from what I have heard this evening in their talk, will stay here four or six days, and they have come willingly, in order to remove the noise and confusion of the court from the ears of the Ill<sup>ma</sup> Signora Maria, and of her they desire news every day, and thus desire it should be Vostra Signoria's care to advise them how she does.... (il Trebbio, Dec. 3rd, 1543.)

For Maria's hopes of improving health had all been vain, and after many years of suffering, aggravated no doubt by the ignorance of even the best doctors of that day, she was now on her death-bed.

"Exactly at the twenty-first hour," writes the physician on December 12th, "Sua Illma. Signoria passed from this life, so that here on all sides are groans and sobs and weeping, and everyone is beside

himself...<sup>1</sup>” Maria assuredly was grieved for by many and left behind her the record of a self-sacrificing, charitable life. The son she had idolised and probably spoilt had now many closer interests, and there is no doubt that the really deep affection of his life was for his wife, not his mother. More I think cannot, on the evidence before us, be said; I have found no trace of the black ingratitude of which he is often accused. However in fairness Galluzzi’s observation must be quoted which—for he is no very lenient historian—gives the feeling current at the time:

The public charged him with ingratitude towards so affectionate a mother, all the more as it needed a strong remonstrance from Campana to induce him to give up his hunting and console his dying mother<sup>2</sup>.

As the letters show, Cosimo and his wife had spent the greater part of the autumn with Maria (a fact also noted by Signor Conti), but Galluzzi perhaps refers to the court having, as we know, left Castello for il Trebbio. The end in any case was rather sudden, since a messenger despatched to summon Cosimo arrived too late for the Duke to be present at his mother’s death:

“Tell his Excellency,” writes Campana to Riccio, “that I do not judge the Signora his mother desired to say to him one thing more than another, but that in truth she asked twice for his Excellency, when she was at that pass, moved more by desire of seeing him than by aught else. And if his Excellency was not summoned in time, let him be assured that, had the Signora not asked for him, we had not sought to put him to inconvenience needlessly; but when Sua Signoria showed this desire (which was at the last) a messenger was sent, and without a letter, that no time should be lost; but all is for the best, since the death of Sua Signoria was as marvellously quiet as could be desired (*quietissima, quanto si potesse desiderare*)<sup>3</sup>. ”

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. cit.* and Conti, *op. cit.* p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> Galluzzi, *Storia del Granducato di Toscana* (new edition, Firenze, 1823), vol. i. p. 124.

<sup>3</sup> Conti, *op. cit.* p. 276.

The letter is indeed too apologetic for our taste, when we reflect on the occasion when it was written, but the custom of the day favoured this rather servile style of writing on the part of dependents. For the rest, Cosimo was not indeed a devoted son, but there is no need to paint him as altogether cruel and unfeeling.

## CHAPTER V

### THE SIENESE WAR—SIEGE OF SIENA—BATTLE OF MARIANO—BLOCKADE AND SURRENDER OF SIENA

LEAVING the pleasant subject of Cosimo's married life and his pastimes we must now return to the <sup>1547</sup> troubrous history of the next years, which is mainly a record of futile yet devastating wars. French and Imperialists were still contending for the mastery in Italy, and first one, then another, was involved in battles and conspiracies, while round the coasts there was ever the haunting fear of a Turkish raid. It is a weary and confusing subject. One petty skirmish follows another, with an occasional bold but ill-organised effort to throw off foreign or native despotism, among which the plots of Burlamacchi and Fiesco are the most important. In all these Cosimo, though indirectly involved, took no very leading part. Burlamacchi's attempt to free Lucca and the adjoining states such as Tuscany and the Emilia from "tyrants" was an heroic but sadly Utopian scheme, ending in his own betrayal and death at Milan by order of Charles V (February, 1548). Nor need it be referred to at greater length, but for the fact that Cosimo has been reported as mainly instrumental in causing Burlamacchi's execution.

The facts seem to be that Charles V, when urged to set Burlamacchi free, declared himself ready to do so provided the Duke of Florence also consented. Cosimo on his part, who had already asked that Burlamacchi should be handed over to him, agreed that his life should be spared if he were first allowed to examine him. To this, however, the Lucchesi would not consent, and to this extent Burlamacchi's death may be said to lie at Cosimo's door.

He had, however, promised that, if Burlamacchi were surrendered to him "he should be restored, alive and unhurt<sup>1</sup>," and though it is at once assumed that the promise would have been broken, it is but an assumption. Reumont<sup>2</sup> long ago pointed out that what Cosimo wanted was, not the man's life but information about Lucca and the Lucchesi. It was, first and foremost, his own townspeople who were responsible for Burlamacchi's death. Conscious that they themselves in a like predicament would have confessed anything and everything, they would not hear of his being questioned by Cosimo, lest something to their detriment should come out. Instead, they promptly put the matter into the hands of the Emperor, which was as good as signing Burlamacchi's death-warrant. He was indeed doubly betrayed for he delayed in his flight to reassure a man who was privy to the plot, but this very comrade went at once to give word of his secret departure to the Signory and so prevented his escape. And next, his own townspeople destroyed what might have been his one chance of life by refusing the condition on which Charles is said to have promised it. It is, in fact, difficult to make out much of a case against the Duke in favour of the republican Lucchesi. Their advocate in this instance also betrays that it was Cosimo's avowed enemy, Ferrante Gonzaga, who, with the Venetian ambassadors (never friendly to the new power), most influenced the Signory of the little state. What harm came to Cosimo from slanders rife at Venice will presently be seen. We may end by quoting the observation of a modern writer, who questions whether Cosimo or anyone else could have guaranteed Burlamacchi's life, since the Emperor was thoroughly alarmed by the conspiracy and wished "to strike great terror into the

<sup>1</sup> *Rassegna Nazionale*, 1886; article by Torello del Carlo, p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> Reumont, *Francesco Burlamacchi* (1848).

Italians, since new and far-reaching designs on the part of France were then developing in the peninsula<sup>1.</sup>" Cosimo himself wrote to his ambassador at Venice, Pierfilippo Pandolfini:

.... No other reply to your letter is needed; save as to Burlamacco, who 'tis said was beheaded at our instance; as to which you can assure everyone that this happened neither at our request nor at our instance, and that we did not interfere therein. We sought indeed that he should be given into our hands, on honourable terms, to learn what foundation there was for his plottings, and the Lucchesi had not the complaisance to agree. For the rest, we left the matter to his Caesarian Majesty<sup>2.</sup>

In short, Burlamacchi, though a man almost quixotically honourable, was a conspirator who would certainly have had little chance of acquittal by any tribunal of the day. Cosimo had personally no interest in his death which, in his opinion, was a matter for the Emperor's jurisdiction. The Duke of Florence wished to examine the man and there is no cause for supposing that he would not have restored him to the Lucchesi when that terrible ordeal was over, after which it would only remain for the unfortunate Burlamacchi to be tried again at Milan where he would unquestionably be condemned to death. There is, on the face of it, no reason why Cosimo should have been expected to intercede for a man who had been so meanly sacrificed to the interests of his fellow-citizens at Lucca. But for all that, the Duke, on the strength of his non-intervention, is at once accused of hypocrisy and innate ferocity.

We cannot, however, turn as soon as we could wish from the gloomy political history of the next years. Whether Cosimo won or lost Piombino, whether French or Imperialists gained the upper hand in the duchy

<sup>1</sup> Ettore Callegari, *L' Italia durante le Preponderanze Straniere* (Storia politica d' Italia scritta da una Società di Professori, Milano),

P 47.

<sup>2</sup> Firenze, *Arch. di Stato*, Carte Strozziiane, LXIX.

of Parma, whether Fiesco or D'Oria ruled in Genoa—these things need not occupy us. But two events must detain us, for the death of Lorenzino cannot pass altogether unnoticed and it will be necessary to dwell at some length on the war with Siena, in which was displayed Cosimo's ability no less than his unpleasing quality of ruthlessness, degenerating into cruelty.

As early as March 3rd, 1537, a price had been set on the head of Lorenzino—not, however, by Cosimo, but by Margaret of Austria, the widow of the murdered Alessandro. In all that follows indeed it must not be forgotten that it was Charles V who, more remorselessly than anyone, hunted down Lorenzino. The story is an ugly one enough, and shows as nothing else can, how dark was the underside of political intrigue in that age. Lorenzo the traitor, as he was invariably called by his enemies, had put himself outside the pale; any means were lawful by which to entrap and kill him. All that can be said for Cosimo is that he delayed a long while in carrying out the vengeance which Charles V more than once urged him to take. Why Charles had not agents of his own to do his dirty work does not appear, but perhaps he had reason to trust to the greater skill of Cosimo's secret service. "I am of opinion," writes Signor Ferrai, "that the Duke of Florence felt a strong repugnance to staining himself with the blood of his cousin<sup>1</sup>." Whether, if Lorenzino had kept clear of intrigue, the Duke would have gone so far as to turn a persistently deaf ear to the representations of Don Pedro de Toledo and Don Juan de Mendoza who can tell? We can but hope it might have been so, though expressions of sympathy for Lorenzino are certainly not found among Cosimo's remains. We should perhaps not forget the extent to which private blood feuds were kept up in Italy, so that to avenge as brutal a murder as ever was plotted in cold blood may have seemed to Cosimo a sacred,

<sup>1</sup> Ferrai, *Lorenzino de' Medici*, p. 377.

even if a distasteful, duty. Lorenzino would nowadays probably be judged irresponsible, but in his own age he was merely looked on as an exceptionally wicked man who had deliberately planned a most cowardly assassination and murdered a man whose close intimate he was, and this without the excuse that he was blinded by ungovernable rage. But whether Lorenzino, had he kept out of harm's way, would have escaped suffering for his crime we cannot tell. Far from doing so, he was implicated in Burlamacchi's and Fiesco's conspiracies and a marked man to every Imperialist. Thus it came about that, in the spring of 1548, Gian Francesco Lottini was sent to Venice where Lorenzino then was. His ostensible mission was to discuss with the Signory the wearisome question of precedence between the Duke of Florence and the Duke of Ferrara. But Lottini was a man in no good repute, and with a chequered past, well known as one who was often employed on services which an honourable man would have refused. And this was a case in point. Lottini was in Venice with orders to find a man willing to assassinate Lorenzino. It is instructive that the first promising instrument discovered was a certain Capitano Valeriano, who had been a servant of Don Diego de Mendoza and was in the employ of his brother Don Juan—the man, in other words, who had been urging Cosimo to have Lorenzino removed. The whole affair, in fact, was an act of vengeance quite as much on the part of Charles as of Cosimo, though he alone has usually been made the scapegoat. It was, however, in the end two fellow-citizens of Lottini's, Francesco da Bibbona and Bebo da Volterra, who dogged Lorenzino's footsteps until, near the bridge of San Tomà, they stabbed him mortally.

Cosimo may have been unwilling to bring about Lorenzino's death, but when once he intervened, he certainly did so to some purpose. He did worse,

however, for it was now a question of saving appearances, although in truth that was no easy task. One is indeed forced to suppose that no one cared very much about saving them, the flimsiest excuses serving the purpose. For though Cosimo, it is regrettable to say, wrote to his ordinary ambassador in Venice, Pierfilippo Pandolfini, and in so many words declared Lottini innocent, it was a lie which can have deceived no one—unless Pandolfini himself, too honest a man to have been admitted to Lottini's confidence. Had Cosimo wished to keep secret his intention, it is incredible he should have allowed Lottini's share to be so obvious as it was when the assassins were his fellow-townsmen. With equal cynicism the two men in question unhesitatingly took refuge with Don Juan de Mendoza, until they could safely be transferred to Piacenza, where his brother Don Diego received them with congratulations<sup>1</sup>. It had indeed been an open secret that Lottini had other ends in view than his avowed mission, and Lorenzino himself had been warned of this. It only remained for the Signory of Venice and the Duke of Florence officially to disclaim, on the one hand any instigation of the murder, and, on the other, any connivance at the assassins' escape. The murder itself, it must be remembered, was looked on merely as just vengeance; Charles V heard of it with marked satisfaction; Margaret of Austria refused a reward to the messenger who brought her news of it on the ground that it ought to have been earned eleven years before<sup>2</sup>. To Cosimo what seems to us a base and treacherous act was a "Santa opera," and it seems to have been the general conviction that Lorenzo *il traditore* could expect no better end. We can but try to keep in mind the different point of view, to remember the extent to which political dissimulation was practised, the

<sup>1</sup> For all this see Ferrai, *op. cit.* pp. 377-390.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 392.

extraordinary cruelty which was then held permissible and the low value set on human life.

Those were dark days, and even more gloomy were those that followed when war broke out between

**1548-54** Florence and Siena. The trouble in Siena was

of old standing, for that unquiet town had now additional elements of discord in the presence both of the Spanish envoy and later of Spanish troops. Charles V after the fall of Florence, already designing, it may be, to bring Siena under his rule<sup>1</sup>, restored the Sienese exiles and reformed the government. Needless to say, tumult soon followed, and between 1539 and 1554 when the war of independence began, Siena passed not a single year of peace—a state of things, indeed, rather normal than otherwise in that republic. It was not only Siena's hereditary enemy who questioned: “Or fu giammai, gente si vana come la Sænese?”<sup>2</sup> for her own more responsible citizens filled their diaries with lamentations over the amazing instability of her government.

This was finally demonstrated in these last years of freedom, when not only did the internal government incline now to the aristocratic and now to the democratic faction, but not one envoy or Captain-General, were he Imperialist or French, could for long keep a footing in Siena. Don Lopez de Soria, Don Ferrante Gonzaga, Don Juan de Luna, Don Diego de Mendoza the Imperialists, Monsignor de Termes and Cardinal d'Este of Ferrara in the French interest succeeded one another with a monotonous sameness in the close of their rule at Siena, for each of them was removed or superseded (with more or less consideration, according to his rank) as distasteful to the citizens.

<sup>1</sup> This is the opinion of Signor Antonio Cosci; *L'Italia durante le Preponderanze Straniere, dal 1530 al 1789*, p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> *Inferno*, canto xxix.

During these years Cosimo dominated the imagination of the Sienese, who could not but dread his known ambition to widen his borders, and who distrusted—what they would have done better to accept—any overture of help or of intervention on his part. For the Sienese, impulsive and fickle as they were, had at least one lasting passion; a rooted distrust and hatred of Florence, whose southern border was blocked by Siena on her hills crowned with the cathedral towers. This passionate jealousy, little less strong on the part of Florence (sadly often a characteristic of the history of Italian republics), embittered this last war to an incredible degree, and prevented the Sienese from accepting an honourable peace until every sort of horror had been endured. Who can doubt that the Florentines, on their side, had a rankling memory of the help given by Siena to their enemies in the siege of 1529, when, never thinking of a possible Nemesis, Siena gave vent to her hatred of Florence by providing the imperial troops with artillery, munitions and provisions<sup>1</sup>?

Matters began to come to a crisis in 1552, after the Emperor, in an ill-advised moment, had ordered the building of a fortress to keep the turbulent town in check. A fiercer outbreak than usual was the result of this coercion, during which the Spaniards were driven to seek refuge in their fortress, for the Sienese exiles had made their way into the town and there was no holding them. With the Spaniards was a detachment of Florentine troops sent at the request of Don Diego de Mendoza, the Governor. Fearful as the Sienese were of bringing upon them the Duke of Florence, they now sent to him hurriedly, assuring him there was no change in their imperial allegiance, but that Mendoza alone was hated. They wished to have their liberty and be free of the violence and insolence

<sup>1</sup> Reumont, *Geschichte Toscana's*, vol. i. p. 146.

of the Spaniards but to live under the protection of the Emperor<sup>1</sup>.

Cosimo sent an envoy, who was enquiring into the securities offered by the Sienese to guarantee these undertakings, when there arrived from France Monseigneur de Lansac, French ambassador to the Pope. He, seizing an opportunity of furthering French interests, found no difficulty in persuading the citizens rather to continue their resistance than consent to give hostages for their good behaviour, as Cosimo had demanded. The Duke realised that the Spanish and Florentine troops were dangerously placed in Siena and could not be relieved, and therefore modified his proposals. He now stipulated that his four hundred men with the Spaniards (all in the fortress) should leave the town, while the Sienese on their part should expel all foreign troops from their territory. Siena meanwhile, with no conditions imposed on her and no governor to guide her, should remain faithful to the Emperor. The Sienese added a clause by which the French troops, newly arrived under de Lansac, should not be forced to disperse till all the Spaniards had gone, intending thereby to cause the evacuation of the coast-town of Orbetello. But in fact this merely led to French troops remaining near at hand and to a virtual disregarding of the agreement just come to<sup>2</sup>. De Lansac had been received in Siena with joy, meanwhile; the banners of France were displayed and the hated fortress was razed to the ground by the excited people.

The continued presence of French troops in and about Siena was by no means lost on Cosimo, who at this time had very little reason to be satisfied with his treatment by Charles. The Duke was growing fully aware of his own value and more than ever galled by the Emperor's inadequate appreciation of it, as shown

<sup>1</sup> Adriani, *op. cit.* vol. III. p. 246

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 167.

by his perpetual shilly-shallying in the question of Piombino. That neighbouring state, so coveted by Cosimo, now seemed positively in his grasp and now, by a turn in imperial politics, was withdrawn. This was therefore the moment to approach the side of France—though there was little seriousness in such advances—while, by refusing on plausible pretexts to provide supplies for the imperial treasury he would also prove to Charles how ill he could do without his help, and how important it was to conciliate him even to the extent of one day giving him the state, not of Piombino, but of Siena. But we must not lose ourselves in the mazes of the secret policy of those days, though it is not out of place to observe that Cosimo was by no means the only Italian prince who coveted Siena. The Farnesi in particular had set their affections on it, and had had no small share in stirring up strife within the city.

However, the day was coming for open warfare. Cosimo had so far intervened but little outwardly in Sienese affairs. France and Spain were equally unwelcome to him as masters of a neighbouring republic; the Farnesi were lifelong enemies. Instead he tried—quite vainly it is true—to induce the Sienese to look on him as a friendly mediator between them and greater powers. To suggestions that he should himself undertake the war against Siena in the interest of Charles he turned a deaf ear, and in vain did the Emperor confidently say: “Let us set the Duke of Florence on them (*Mandiamo loro addosso il Duca di Firenze*)<sup>1</sup>”; the Duke of Florence had a clearly defined purpose and would not be hurried into action. Far more to his liking would it have been had Charles V and Henri II between them fought out the question of Siena, while the Duke of Florence and the Pope waited for the psychological moment at which to intervene. Then in the end a treaty might so be framed that

<sup>1</sup> Galluzzi, *op. cit.* vol. i. p. 150.

"neither the King nor the Emperor should remain master of Siena<sup>1</sup>." Cosimo, we may conclude, wished in truth to see himself master of Siena though not, we may add, in the manner in which it came about. A long and bloody war was no part of his plan, but he cherished the vain hope that by degrees a party favourable to him might prevail in Siena, when once she was sickened of hollow promises from France or reduced to the utmost extremity by imperial troops. It is hardly surprising that the Sienese mistrusted his fair promises and repeated assurances that they should be left their liberty. And yet—for this seems the point so often missed—Siena would have done better had she accepted Cosimo's overtures. Master he would in the end have made himself, but a master, Siena, like the other Italian states, was bound to have; under him she would have found herself virtually more free, because more at peace and better disciplined, than when her own ambassadors treated with Rome or Venice. Cosimo, in coveting Siena, only resembled his fellow-princes: where he differed from them was, first, in the capacity for attaining his own ends and, secondly, in his ability to govern a subject state with a liberality and justice hitherto unknown.

His assurances, then, that he was a friend to the Sienese had possibly more truth in them than is often supposed, but the time was almost past for negotiation. Charles, when affairs in Germany left him a breathing space, promptly realised that the presence in Siena of Cardinal d'Este as Governor for Henri II was intolerable. Don Francisco de Toledo, Galluzzi tells us, was sent by Cosimo to urge this on him, but it is difficult to believe that, as soon as Charles had leisure for Italian affairs, much pressure was needed. It is only necessary to remember how keen was his rivalry with France. Cosimo's own experience of friendship

<sup>1</sup> Adriani, *op. cit.* vol. III. p. 289

with Henri had soon satisfied him, and on one pretext or another, he was slipping out of new obligations and returning to the imperial side. His temporary wavering may probably be looked upon as a mere ruse to force the Emperor's hand and to demonstrate his own independence. This appears plainly in his instructions to his ambassador in Rome:

...In the first place you are to point out...that I am no feudatory of his Caesarian Majesty, nor beholden to him, save for the gracious treatment I have had from him; nor am I bound to be friend of his friend and enemy of his enemy more than likes me. I have in truth promised not to act against him and this for the benefits I have received from him. And this promise I am fain to keep so long as his Majesty uses me well...<sup>1</sup>.

Assured beforehand that the Emperor could not afford to do without him, he now showed himself discontented with Henri. The Cardinal d'Este, an ambitious intriguer, was no acceptable neighbour. Cosimo was furious that Piero Strozzi was named among the faithful adherents of France who must not be harmed by the Duke of Florence. Finally, he could, he told Henri, no longer remain even neutral. His father-in-law, Don Pedro, was to undertake the war against Siena and a refusal to aid him would mean an attack on Florence.

Don Pedro, however (perhaps unfortunately for the Sienese), died before he reached camp, and an interval followed during which there rained proposals and counter-proposals on the part of France, the Pope and Cosimo; marriages were discussed, agreements suggested, but all with hardly enough semblance of reality to deceive. Meantime, war was already begun in desultory fashion on Sienese territory and more real alarm was caused by Turkish raids though, thanks to Cosimo, Elba and Portoferraio were too securely fortified to be in danger. Up till now, Cosimo had

<sup>1</sup> *Négociations diplomatiques de la France avec la Toscane*. Documents recueillis par Giuseppe Canestrini et publiés par Abel Desjardins, vol. III. (Paris, 1865), p. 238.

hung back, watching the game; glad, while he offered troops to Charles, that the Emperor still dreaded his ambitious schemes too much to welcome his armed assistance and accepted none but small contingents, for thus he was not too greatly compromised either with France or Siena<sup>1</sup>. But a time, so he reckoned, was sure to come when Charles would find his own resources insufficient. Then the Duke of Florence would step in, preferably as a mediator, but if necessary as the Emperor's lieutenant to bring back the Ghibelline Siena to her old allegiance. In 1553 he judged the time was ripe for action. Pope Julius III had succeeded to the hostile Paul III, and Cosimo had now further secured his southern boundaries by the betrothal of his second daughter, Isabella, to Paolo Giordano Orsini who had large estates near the Tuscan frontier. The Pope was further pleased by the suggestion of marrying another Medici daughter to his nephew, Fabiano del Monte. Therefore Bartolommeo Concini, Cosimo's trusted secretary, was sent to the Emperor to discuss the matter of Siena and it was agreed that Charles, on condition of Cosimo's providing men, and above all sufficient money for the campaign, should indemnify him for all his expenses. Considering the habitual emptiness of the imperial treasury, it must surely have been from the first questionable whether Cosimo would ever need to surrender the cities and forts taken in Sienese territory, which were to be his until he was compensated for his disbursements. But, thanks to the devastations of a merciless campaign, the gaining of Siena proved a costly affair to the Duke of Florence. It was possibly Charles who in the end had the advantage.

From the beginning the war promised to be a cruel one; the Commander-in-Chief, Gian Jacopo de' Medici, Marchese di Marignano, brother of Pope Pius IV, had

<sup>1</sup> G Mondaini, *La Storia dei suoi tempi di G. B. Adriani*, 1905, p. 60.

a great reputation as a soldier but, in his last campaign, chiefly proved himself a brutal captain. On the other hand the French had sent, and the Sienese with fatal lack of foresight had accepted, Piero Strozzi as captain of their forces. Now it was well known that between Cosimo and Strozzi there could be neither peace nor truce; openly and secretly they were enemies. Thus when the Duke of Florence began directing operations, it was evident from the outset that he would make no treaty, and listen to no conditions offered by a man whom he considered—rightly or wrongly—as a rebel to his authority and entitled to no consideration; one whom, on his first arrival in Siena, he plotted to have shot<sup>1</sup>. The choice of Strozzi as general at once embittered the whole state of affairs and suggested that this would be a war without quarter. The feeling in Florence (where Cosimo was tolerably unpopular) was expressed in placards found mysteriously posted every day with the words: “Long live France and down with the Emperor<sup>2</sup>.” The Sienese themselves were not blind to the danger they courted by their action, for they reflected: The Duke of Florence will keep none of the past agreements, for he always expressly stipulated “that the city of Siena should not harbour nor favour any of his rebels or enemies,” while they also judged that “without the aid and goodwill of the Duke of Florence, his Caesarian Majesty could do them but little harm<sup>3</sup>. ”

The more thoughtful citizens thus deprecated the confirmation of Strozzi’s appointment, nor did they judge Cosimo’s protestations of friendship as altogether

<sup>1</sup> Strozzi, on his part, is credibly accused of having plotted to poison Cosimo. See Aldo Manucci, *op. cit.* p. 133, and Ranke, *Historisch-biographische Studien*; also Galluzzi, *op. cit.* vol. II. p. 129.

<sup>2</sup> Galluzzi, *op. cit.* vol. II. p. 30.

<sup>3</sup> *Archivio Storico Italiano*, vol. II. 1842. *Diario delle Cose avvenute in Siena dai 20 luglio 1550, ai 28 giugno 1555, Scritto da Alessandro Sozzini*, p. 157.

hollow, even after the first serious act of warfare on his part. This occurred on January 26th, 1554, when, to the consternation of the Sienese, Marignano, before ever they suspected his intention, made a forced night march and took the fort of Camollia, thus becoming practically master of one gate of Siena. This action is often spoken of as an instance of unparalleled perfidy, but, given the times, given even the traditions of Italian warfare, it must be confessed that such blame seems exaggerated. The Sienese had consciously put themselves in the wrong with Cosimo, first by making no effort to dismiss the French troops as stipulated, and secondly by accepting Piero Strozzi as their commander. It showed unusual ingenuousness on their part if they really expected no reprisals from the Duke. When once Cosimo had made up his mind to war, it was true to his usual policy to keep his movements secret, and the Sienese, fearful as they were of him, should have been the first to realise that they stood in danger of being attacked by Florentine as well as Spanish troops, whether or no war was formally proclaimed. The Duke in a letter written two days later assured the Sienese that he desired nothing but the removal of the French troops. As soon as the Sienese consented to be rid of these, they would find him bent on their welfare. They on their part—not unnaturally—saw the matter differently, reproaching Cosimo for his ill faith, and proudly asserting that the French were not their oppressors but their friends. “We will do our best,” they ended, “to bring it about that your Excellency can neither offend us by your threats nor again deceive us<sup>1</sup>. ” But once again:

the wiser and more cool-headed citizens disapproved this fierce hostility, judging that the Duke in his letter had sincerely and out of good will discovered his kindly intentions; for, being a new ruler

<sup>1</sup> *Continuazione delle memorie Storico-critiche della città di Siena*, dal Conte Giovanni Antonio Pecci (Siena, MDCCCLVIII), vol. iv p. 119.

of a powerful people, among whom he had many rivals and many enemies (both open and secret), he with great prudence desired peace<sup>1</sup>.

Nor need we doubt that the cool-headed citizens were in the right, and that Cosimo, even at this eleventh hour, would gladly have withdrawn his troops; if Siena would but co-operate with him, he would guide her wisely enough for her own interests as well as his.

But no one could expect that moderation would prevail, and the cruel war continued, with endless sackings and burnings, with taking and retaking of towns, with occasional acts of heroism, but more frequent cases of treachery and cruelty. It was not carried on as Cosimo would have desired. How he would have dealt with the matter, if it came to war, appears in a letter written to the Emperor. Had his vigorous measures been agreed to, in place of the dilatory methods which he explicitly condemned and none the less was reduced to by Charles' habitual hesitation, a cruel page of Italian history might perhaps never have been written. There were, he wrote, two ways of acting:

One of which is to attack them with vigour and swiftness, with a body of fifteen thousand foot and six hundred horse at least; where-with, entering (their territory) on two sides, with sixteen pieces of heavy artillery, all their land could be occupied; and this I judge could be done in three months, not less, for I would not speak unadvisedly. And let none think to take the city by assault, because if there be men with a mind to defend it, 'twould not succeed, and if any hath so persuaded your Majesty, be assured he does not well understand the matter.....Do you give them time, the affair would be most difficult, since, by what is rumoured, the French will take three or four strongly situate convenient places (whereof there is no lack) and will fortify them, and were they once fortified, little harm could come to Siena, there being abundance of provisions and its position strong, so that to besiege it is impossible. And this is most plain, nor can Siena be besieged unless all Sienese territory be taken. And this were one device.

The other would be by way of feigning and giving them no umbrage whatsoever, so that the French...content themselves with a garrison....'Tis certain that in a few months they (the Sienese) will be of many diverse opinions, and will themselves, on one pretext or another, see to turning out the garrison, that they be left free. This is slow and uncertain but, as they saw your Majesty paid no heed to them, it might be that this plan would succeed, for your Majesty must ever bear in mind that in their souls dwells, and will ever dwell, the longing to be free.

The third device were that of keeping them in fear and seeking to make lingering war on them. This were the most pernicious of all; for that they will throw themselves into the hands of the French; will fortify their strongholds, and their territory will be brought into such a state as little can be done by force<sup>1</sup>.

None the less, it was the disastrous third method which was chosen, and pitiable indeed was the condition of Siena and its territory at the close of the fifteen months that followed. Nothing would induce the Sienese to give in until the blockade had lasted intolerably long, and starvation had weakened even their stout hearts. Monluc's commentaries have made the heroic defence of Siena in the last months of the war too famous for it to be dwelt on here. Nor would a detailed account of endless skirmishes and the recital of horrors be profitable reading. From the first the Duke of Florence refused to treat as prisoners of war those Florentine rebels who were taken captive. He looked on them as traitors, and, instead of ransom, imprisonment and sometimes death was their lot. On the other hand, there is ground for thinking that Marignano (with whom Cosimo was increasingly dissatisfied) exceeded his instructions in his cruelty to the unhappy peasants. Nor is it difficult to see how this might happen with a general who no doubt shared the prevailing opinion as to the utter worthlessness of peasants' lives. Nowhere was this sentiment so strong as in Italy where, we read: "during the whole of the

<sup>1</sup> *Négociations diplomatiques...*, Canestrini et Desjardins, vol. III. pp. 327-8.

Renaissance, the peasantry... were regarded by those above them with a scorn that degenerated into hatred<sup>1</sup>." And as between Florentine and Sienese *contadini* we may well imagine that such feelings were at their height, and to be expressed somewhat in the words of the old mediaeval song, full of contempt for the

naturam  
Maledictam et obscuram  
Rusticorum genituram  
Infelicem et non puram<sup>2</sup>.

And in fine, the Spaniards, who formed a large part of the troops sent against Siena, had no very good name for waging what Sozzini calls *buona guerra*. The Sienese on their side showed no greater tenderness to their own *ribelli* but ordered confiscation of their goods and allowed that they might be killed whenever taken and their possessions given to whoever acted in accordance with this decree<sup>3</sup>. Thus it rather appears that Cosimo was much like his fellow-countrymen and that many reproaches heaped on him are due to the odium consequent on his succeeding where others had failed. Without wishing to condone the cruelties of the Sienese war, it is only just to point out that they were not confined to the attacking army. It would seem, indeed, that Cosimo's contemporaries were chiefly taken aback at his severity towards the rebellious Florentines (who after all had a chance of escaping with their lives<sup>4</sup> and at least went to their fate with open eyes), while the modern reader feels more con-

<sup>1</sup> T. Lindsay, *A History of the Reformation* (Edinburgh, 1906), vol. II. p. 501.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>3</sup> Sozzini, *op. cit.* p. 311.

<sup>4</sup> It is difficult to discover what proportion of the exiles captured was executed. A writer in the *Rassegna Nazionale* speaks of the chief prisoners being sent to Florence and there "all" being beheaded. Segni, usually considered accurate, and a contemporary, mentions that four of them were beheaded, the rest set free. *Vide Rassegna Nazionale*, 1886, L. Gottanelli. Segni, *Storie fiorentine* (Barbera, 1857), p. 559.

sternation at the doom of the innocent and hapless peasants. Against their sufferings at least Cosimo protested, and this in letters of his to his trusted and confidential secretary, Bartolommeo Concini, to whom he was in the habit of expressing himself unreservedly. We will turn to these letters for information as to the Duke's frame of mind during the war, and for the rest confine ourselves to a brief account of the decisive battle of Marciano, ending with a few details of the last defence made by Siena.

As early as the 18th of April, 1554, we find Cosimo  
1554-5 bitterly complaining to his commissary in the camp:

Concino... matters are going but slowly, and I hasten to protest to the Marchese that I cannot thus continue; see therefore that you make him understand it... and what is worse, it seems to us that the Marchese does everything, and does it not willingly; whence this comes we know not.... We cannot lose more time in this fashion, and say plainly that we will take order differently in future, and will not longer weary ourselves with writing, seeing that things are on no good footing and that we think to have discovered the aims of certain people (*il fine delle persone*)<sup>1</sup>.

For the Duke suspected that Marignano showed little good will or interest in the campaign and one wonders what had been his feelings on learning how the night-attack on Siena had been carried out some months before:

"I have," says Brantôme, "seen many people amazed at a strange and unwonted form of war practised by the said Marquis (before Siena)... and this was an *escalade* made by night with so many torches, lanterns and flaring lights (as when the Jews went out to take our Lord Jesus Christ) that it was a most unusual thing, since such an assault and *camisade* should ever be made as softly as possible"<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Cantini, *op. cit* p. 534.

<sup>2</sup> Brantôme, *Oeuvres Complètes* (Paris, 1858), vol. I. p. 339.

Add to which, the Florentine troops, the better to light up the whole scene, had set fire to some neighbouring straw-stacks.

But the Duke's anger was roused to a degree which was too great for Concini's comfort when he learnt in June that Piero Strozzi had made an unexpected sally from Siena with the main body of his troops, amounting to about 4000 Italian infantry (the best he had) and 400 light horse. Piero hoped to join forces with the French, who he continually and fruitlessly believed would come to his aid, and now, with his usual impetuosity, pushed on to within twenty miles of Florence. Setting the example to his soldiers, he was the first to plunge into the Arno near Ponte a Signa. Great was the consternation in Florence and Cosimo's anger burned hotly:

"Anyone in his senses," he writes, "can judge if you yonder are careless or no, for to-day is the third day that the troops have been gone out of Siena, and you are doing nought but sleep soundly. God be thanked, things have up to now gone better than we estimated might be; for, had they so wished, they had sacked San Casciano, and Empoli had been in danger. Methinks they will not attempt Pisa, but since they can...come and go where it pleases them..., meseemeth they can, even as they will, go to camp at Pisa and fortify Pontedera and Casciano; and you will sit, scratching your bellies and looking, half asleep, at the fair towers of Siena, while you are losing the fairest opportunity that ever a captain had. This dilatoriness on your part is not new to me nor is there this time any excuse, for 'tis three days that you confess you have known of this sortie...I am not deceived as to your sloth and negligence, and if you believe me not, yet you may see that I had made provision, for that I believed not your idle talk....If you will not act or know not how to act, suffer me to act alone, for I am assured that I shall not be caught like a simpleton, nor have my lands burnt by a handful of ragamuffins (da tre scalzi)...Twill be well if no disorder follows at Pisa....I will say no more, for so great is my anger that I can write no more...<sup>1</sup>." (Florence, June 13th, 1554.)

<sup>1</sup> *Carte Stroziane, Inventario, C. Guasti* (Firenze, 1884), vol. i. p. 117.



*Giorgio Vasari*

COSIMO SENDS HELP TO SERRAVALLE  
From a picture in the Palazzo Vecchio

*Photo Biagi*



Even when pursued by such vehement reproaches, Marignano moved but slowly, and it was certainly chiefly due to Piero Strozzi's proverbial bad luck that he accomplished little by his hasty marches and sharp skirmishes in the hilly district north of Florence. How Cosimo expressed himself when, a little later, Piero Strozzi slipped through Marignano's fingers we do not know, but assuredly Concini was not spared. For Marignano had been forced by Strozzi to make a hurried retreat (suspiciously like a flight) on Pistoia, causing thereby the gates of Prato and even Florence to be closed as if in time of siege. Nor was this all, for, as a climax, the Marchese, though reinforced by Don Juan de Luna, failed to cut off Strozzi's retreat on Siena. Yet, with de Luna in front of him, Marignano in his rear and the Lucchesi (on whose land he was) inclined to withdraw their support, Piero was in a wretched plight. Help from the French had, as usual, failed him, and no galleys had arrived. In fact, in Marignano's opinion he was safely trapped, but he did not reckon with his opponent's resourceful spirit. Though the Arno was so swollen that to ford it seemed impossible, Strozzi watched the river carefully, well aware how quickly the turbulent stream might abate. Then by night he sent his captain, Cornelio Bentivoglio, to examine if he could nowhere find a practicable spot to cross, and soon was laughing at his discomfited enemies left with the river between them. He gained, however, but little by his brave sally, whose success had been contingent not only on the untrustworthy French, but also on an expected republican rising in the districts of Tuscany. For, like all the exiles, like all the leaders of a forlorn hope, Piero had a pathetic belief in winning an enthusiastic response from unarmed peasants. Cosimo, after this experience, was resolved to have no more procrastination and lack of energy, and it was due to his urgency that the decisive

battle of Marciano (or Scannagallo) was fought on August 2nd, 1554. But first he had fresh cause for complaint:

"Messer Bartolommeo Carissimo," he wrote, "it behoved the Signor Vin<sup>o</sup> [?Vincenzo] for his part to provide that our subjects be not worse treated by our soldiers than by the enemy, as hath happened wheresoever ye have passed, for 'tis a great matter that with such robberies, sackings, violence and cruelty as have been used both by the troops that are with Don Giovanni and those that are with the Marchese, there hath not been one general nor chief officer who hath spoken thereof, but they have suffered many of our own possessions to be sacked, and have so terrified our poor subjects that they fly from our men as if they were foes.....Concino, we cannot but grieve bitterly over this, and over all the fair occasions that have been lost of offending and undoing the enemy.....And ye think of nought, save of asking for pay and victuals and of Ruining the country by suffering the war to drag on....You will therefore make these officers understand, one by one, that we do not intend that, now the troops are united...things shall go on in this fashion...<sup>1</sup>." (Florence, June 28th, 1554.)

Cosimo, indeed, began to see with dismay the ravaging of fertile land, and, whether the life or death of the peasants affected him or not, he appreciated their value as husbandmen and would gladly have ended the war by one stroke. This, however, was not to be. The hopes of the Florentine exiles in Rome were high this summer, and the Sienese on their part were cheered by the expectation of seeing French galleys off the coast, prepared to make short work of Spanish garrisons at Orbetello or Talamone. When the time drew near for the battle of Marciano, there was a spirited band of young Florentines at Piero Strozzi's service. These had already enjoyed themselves no little in Rome on Corpus Christi Day, when the church of S. Giovanni dei Fiorentini was hung with tapestries showing the deliverance of the Jews from Babylon, while under the Medici coat of arms was appropriately placed a piece

<sup>1</sup> Firenze, *Archivio di Stato*, Carte Stroziane, xxxv.

of tapestry displaying the story of Brutus and Cassius<sup>1</sup>. On S. John Baptist's Day, too, there had been something of a tumult in Rome, the occasion of it being thus described by Averardo Serristori:

"Tis the custom that the new Consul [who had the care of the interests of Florentines resident in Rome] gives a feast on S. John's day (which is the beginning of his tenure of office), and to this he asks your Excellency's ambassador, and all, or great part, of the Florentine nation [*i.e.* colony]. Hence, Andrea Boni being Consul this year, sent to me this day inviting me to go to supper at the Vigna of the Montauti, and when we had supped, a certain Stanchino (who two days ago returned from France)...came to the head of the table where were seated the Consul and I, and holding a letter in his hand said: "I desire to do my office. This is a letter written by the Most Christian King to you, Consul of the Florentine nation," and he gave it to him and said: "Read it, so as all may hear it."

The Consul took the letter and turned to Serristori, asking what he should do with it. The ambassador bade him give it to him, on which Stanchino demanded it back. Serristori told him to go away, and on the messenger's rather naturally refusing to do so and using haughty words, Serristori answered in the same vein and there was such an uproar that he had at last to give up the letter and went away himself<sup>2</sup>. He might have done better to keep silent instead of snatching at the letter, as was averred by the opposite faction, for Cardinal du Bellay, the French ambassador, made a formal protest to the Pope over the disrespect shown to his master and there the incident ended.

Encouraged by royal approval, the exiles now enrolled themselves under Bindo Altoviti, who chose as his device a bull lifting a yoke on its horns and tossing it into the air<sup>3</sup>. The little band marched under green banners, pathetically symbolic of hope, though the golden H brodered in the middle, surmounted by a

<sup>1</sup> Cosci, *op. cit* p 72

<sup>2</sup> *Négociations diplomatiques*, etc. vol. III p 343.

<sup>3</sup> Cosci, *op. cit* p 72

royal crown, might have warned them of the danger of putting their trust in princes. Round Henri's name fluttered on the wind, clearly to be read, the exiles' chosen motto with such a brave ring to it:

Libertà vo cercando ch' è sì cara  
Come sa chi per lei vita rifiuta<sup>1</sup>.

For this test they soon had opportunity, since for all his reluctance, Marignano was finally forced to give Strozzi battle on August 2nd. French help had at last arrived and skirmishing had been very active. Strozzi began to realise that, as his men were short of pay and might desert him, it was imperative either to fight or else carry the war into the enemy's country. He resolved to scour the Valdichiana and make an attempt on Arezzo, and his new dispositions had at least the effect of making Marignano retreat lest his communications with Tuscany might be cut off. This allowed some provisions to be brought into Siena and a visit from Strozzi himself further encouraged the citizens. He next returned to his camp, intent on his plan for capturing Arezzo, and, reluctantly enough, Marignano followed him, still waiting a favourable moment before attacking. Meanwhile the French troops besieged and soon took a small place named Foiano, lying between Lucignano and Marciano (all of them little fortresses east of Siena), which interfered with their communications. Marignano moved up, but too late to save it, and on his being overtaken by Strozzi there was some desultory fighting. The Marchese now saw that fight he must, but, true to his character, decided it was best to let Strozzi make the first move. Even had his French troops not been driven to this by lack of water and other necessaries, it is difficult to suppose that Strozzi would long have consented to

<sup>1</sup> Cantini, *op. cit.* p 281. The motto is adapted from Dante, *Purgatorio*, canto i. v. 71: "I seek liberty, which is so dear, as he knows who for her sake gives up life."

a waiting game. It was also true that he must now either try the fortune of war or retreat to some safe fortress of the Sienese territory, for hunger and thirst were fast diminishing the number of his troops. On August 1st therefore he sent on his artillery to Foiano, intending to break camp himself next day, for whether he underrated Marignano's strength, or whether he desired, if retreat he must, to retreat with honour, Strozzi was resolved not to steal away by night. This, however, could not pass unchallenged and Marignano, sure of himself, moved to the attack. Between the two armies lay a valley through which ran a river, its bed now dry, and thus for some time the main bodies marched on the hill tops, bands of the opposing forces meanwhile skirmishing, with loss to the French. At last, nearing the end of the valley, both armies descended the hills and met face to face, divided only by the dry torrent bed. Here Marignano halted, once more intending Strozzi to make the first move. But in the end, the Imperialists with their stronger cavalry could not longer be held back; the river bed proved easy to cross, the banks were not steep, and Carlo Gonzaga's charge still more dismayed the French, who had been alarmed at the mere sight of his horse. Little wonder, indeed, for an eye-witness described the imperial cavalry as "a mountain of steel, with towering plumes." Strozzi's men on the other hand, "with gilded weapons and surcoats and with many pages, looked as if prepared for a splendid joust<sup>1</sup>," which, indeed, seemed all that the French troops had a mind for. Sections of the motley army, made up of French, Germans, Spaniards and Italians, fought bravely, but the heart was taken out of them by the desertion of the French cavalry who fled at the first onset, led by their standard bearer. It was afterwards told that the day before he had received a dozen flasks of Trebbiano filled, not with

<sup>1</sup> *La Vita Italiano nel Cinquecento* (Florence, 1893), p. 174.

wine, but with gold pieces. Thus the last battle fought by Italian *fuorusciti* was stained with treachery. The fighting was kept up all day, but the result was never doubtful. The unlucky Piero Strozzi was severely wounded in the thigh, and after in vain rallying his troops, was at last carried off to Lucignano and thence to Montalcino where his straggling troops again gathered. Courage and endurance Strozzi had to a high degree, but his exploits in the Sienese war did not add to the fame which brought him the honour of a marshal's bâton in France. His repeated efforts to force the Sienese to hold out to the last gasp, his unfailing hopes of adequate help from France which never came, seemed to reveal a vein of obstinacy, a deafness to reason, often found in leaders of a lost cause. According to an old rhyme, when others said Yes, he must needs say No. An amended version puts the case more favourably for Piero, but the first rendering no doubt expressed after the acute Florentine fashion the opinion current among his fellow-citizens<sup>1</sup>.

If the Sienese had ever really hoped for success, the battle of Marciano put an end to their dreams, and Cosimo was fully conscious of its importance. One hot and dusty messenger carrying (surely inappropriately) an olive branch, sought him out, riding about Florence; another found him near S. Trinità, where now stands the granite column put up in memory of this day. A solemn Mass was sung and afterwards made an annual ceremony; on the evening of the anniversary races were to be run—the prize, a piece of cloth of

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Segni, op. cit p. 564*, for the Florentine view of Strozzi. The rhyme, following one version, runs.

Qui Piero Strozzi a mattana suona  
Perch' ei volevan che dicesse sì,  
Ed egli sempre rispondea no.

The other gives the last two lines thus:

Perch' ei volevan che dicesse sì;  
Ei nollo disse, perchè era no.

gold. As for the scene of the battle, a church dedicated to S. Maria della Vittoria soon marked its site.

More interesting to us is the fact that Cosimo sheltered and cared for the wounded French soldiers, giving them food and all that they needed for their return home. This conduct compared well with that of the French, who had sent some of their prisoners to the galleys and left many to die in Sienese prisons<sup>1</sup>. Only towards the Florentine rebels was Cosimo inexorable, since he had words of pity for the Sienese and, it would seem, was by no means pleased by Marignano's treatment of the "useless mouths" whom the Sienese drove out, in some cases to be killed by the soldiers:

"Messer Bartolommeo Carissimo," wrote the Duke, "we have heard that the Marchese hath had put to death certain of the Sienese who came out of the city to fly from the famine by which they are hard pressed. We want Siena and do not want the Lives of the Sienese, it being rather our intention they should be respected. We deplore the event and have no mind to be saddened again by such things. Make known our wish to the Marchese, to whom we are writing on this matter, making known to him our disgust and the reproofs which we cannot refrain from<sup>2</sup>."

The words are kindly, yet after all if, as Galluzzi says, the Duke insisted that any who came out of Siena should be driven back into the city, it was but exchanging a swift death for a slow one.

For Siena was being slowly starved into surrender, and all round the city camped Marignano's troops. The infantry lay between the Convent of the Osservanza and Monistero; the artillery above them on the hill, while other regiments were posted at S. Abbondio, with Chiappino Vitelli and the cavalry at S. Regina. The Marchese himself, with the German contingent, held Montecchio, moving later to Belcaro, opposite Porta

<sup>1</sup> A Manucci, *op. cit.* p. 155

<sup>2</sup> Cantini, *op. cit.* p. 599.

S. Marco and Porta Fontebranda<sup>1</sup>. During this miserable winter, while the Sienese suffered torments of hunger and died wretchedly enough, any peasants who were twice over caught bringing them provisions were summarily hanged. It is altogether a woeful picture of the times, and not every cruel action was on the part of the Imperialists. Sozzini, with apparently no sense of surprise or disapproval, mentions that more than once the wells near which the Imperialists were expected to camp were deliberately poisoned<sup>2</sup>. We read with disgust that certain luckless peasants, who had surrendered on their lives being promised them, were none the less killed by the soldiers on the ground that the Marchese their General did not keep faith with poor *contadini*. And next we come on a passage relating the capture by night of a place where about fifty Imperialists were lying sick. These, as the diarist expresses it, the victorious soldiers "cured of every ill"<sup>3</sup>. And what shall we say of the citizens of Siena who, rather than sacrifice their pride, more than once forced women and children out of the town, knowing it was little likely they would escape death? A generous enemy might have let them pass, but, as the Low Countries bore witness, these were not the days of chivalrous warfare. However, the Sienese, undeceived by the result whatever their hopes may have been, repeated the order; not but what many of them were terribly distressed by these piteous scenes, as Sozzini bears witness. The 5th October, 1554, he writes: "there went out of Porta Fontebranda about two hundred and fifty children from the great (Foundling) Hospital, from six to ten years old," carried by mules in panniers. Many men and women joined them, and they had an escort of four companies. But they fell in with several

<sup>1</sup> P. Courteault, *Blaise de Monluc* (Paris, 1909), p. 87.

<sup>2</sup> Sozzini, *op. cit.* pp. 257, 273.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, pp. 260 and 262.

parties of the enemy, and finally the ropes holding the panniers were cut and "all the children took to their legs, and some were killed and some were injured, and many of the women who accompanied them were killed," and all the pack-mules were taken from them and back they had to go to Siena. "It was the most piteous sight to see those little boys robbed and wounded and beaten, lying on the ground, . . . and I would fain have paid five-and-twenty scudi not to have seen them, for for three days I could neither eat nor drink for any good it did me." The children were mustered, and only five found to be missing. "They sent a drummer to the camp, and learnt that two were killed, and three they had taken and would not give up<sup>1</sup>." Pecci says that many of the bigger boys got away, but that the women and little ones, not being able to go forward, while the gates were closed behind them, died in the ditches and the fields<sup>2</sup>. Sozzini, however, as a contemporary, may perhaps be trusted more as to the details, which are in any case sad enough. Indeed, though the number of deaths caused by this order may have been exaggerated (and judging from Sozzini's diary we may conclude this) the only comment one is inclined to make is that of Monluc:

Ce sont les lois de la guerre, et il fault estre cruel bien souvent pour venir à bout de son ennemy. Dieu doibt estre bien miséricordieux en nostre endroict, qui faisons tant de maux<sup>3</sup>.

Again, on October 30th, the boys were once more sent out, this time with no escort, but each one provided with a stick. These boys were from ten to fifteen years old, and next day all returned to Siena barefoot and in their shirts, saying they had been robbed of their clothes and not allowed to pass, and they returned to

<sup>1</sup> Sozzini, *op. cit.* p. 307

<sup>2</sup> Pecci, *op. cit.* vol. IV p. 173

<sup>3</sup> *Commentaires de Blaise de Monluc, Maréchal de France* (Paris, 1861), vol. II. p. 73.

the Foundling Hospital (the Rector of which had resigned in protest against the cruel measure) "two and two as if in procession<sup>1.</sup>"

We must turn to Monluc's commentaries for a record of the heroic bearing of the Sienese during these winter months. Even when in sight of the surrender to which starvation alone could force them, they still could muster spirit to play a game of football in the piazza, on Monluc's telling them the Imperialists were short of food and would soon retire. Suddenly a voice cried: On guard! And every one, leaving the game, seized their weapons and went to their posts.

Piero Strozzi too sent messages from Montalcino in the same hopeful strain, and hatred of the Duke of Florence and of the Spaniards made such words welcome hearing, though even the Sienese scarcely, in their hearts, believed them<sup>2.</sup> And a further exaltation of spirit was caused by a service of intercession on the Feast of the Annunciation, 1555. To this "without any pomp, without the sound of trumpets or the concert of wind instruments, with tears in their eyes the Signoria went," and in the Cathedral the Prior "in a silver dish presented the keys of the gates of the city to the Virgin Mary<sup>3.</sup>" Pathetic indeed must have been the sight, and it is sad to reflect how useless was all this bravery, how needless all this destruction. Truly might Cosimo write to his ambassador in Rome:

It is piteous and causes us infinite displeasure to see the ruin and destruction of that country-side which hath ever been dear to us, and which we fain would have preserved as it had been our own—all this being done by their own fault, and at the instance of those who fed them on vain hopes,... promising strong support and infinite provisions, going so far as to tell them that the burning of the country-side is a sign that the army is about to retire, whereas this was done by those of the Spanish nation for no reason, save that some among them were executed without due cause.

<sup>1</sup> Sozzini, *op. cit.* p. 317.

<sup>3</sup> Pecci, *op. cit.* vol. iv. p. 214.

<sup>2</sup> Cini, *op. cit.* p. 300.

It has already been urged that Cosimo's generous treatment of Siena after the war to some extent disposes of the charge that all his profession of kindly feeling was hypocrisy. While then the Sienese, blind with hatred, and inevitably incapable, in their sore straits, of seeing things in proportion, discovered nothing but falseness and deception in the following letter, we may perhaps take it at its face value instead of reading between the lines. Hunger had disposed the Sienese at least to listen to proposals of treaty, and Cosimo on January 28th, 1555, wrote at length:

....Although many other letters that I have written...have ever been interpreted contrary to my intention and to your good (they being judged sometimes due to weakness, sometimes written with intent to deceive)...none the less 'twould seem to me a falling short of that which I owe, first as a Christian and secondly as one who hath ever loved well doing more than ill, if, when it is in my power, I did not satisfy myself by again writing this present letter, for your benefit and out of pure charity; the which letter, if it have no more profitable result than the others, may yet serve to make clear before God and before the world that I have never desired nor do now desire the destruction of this city, but rather protest to you that, as the time grows short, it will haply not lie in my hands to save your honour and your city, and it will grieve me beyond measure to have been misunderstood from beginning to end...I desiring to assure you that neither any insults received, nor all the slanderous and impertinent letters which...have reached me from your citizens and your ambassadors, will move me one jot from my good will and readiness to do all to preserve your city from final ruin...<sup>1</sup>.

This promise Cosimo surely kept when at last, in April, after more fluctuations and more vain encouragement from Strozzi, the Sienese, fearing lest they might have tried the Duke's patience too far, did seriously prepare, not only to offer terms, but to accept such as should be proposed to them. Some lightening of spirit, it is to be hoped, came to the Sienese at the prospect of

<sup>1</sup> Pecci, *op. cit.* vol. iv. p. 198.

the weary war coming to an end, since we read in Sozzini's diary:

On the said day (13th April) it being Holy Saturday, at the moment of the *Gloria* in the Cathedral Church, all the bells of the city were rung and all the Church bells, and the bell of the Torre della Piazza which rejoiced all hearts, for that they had not been rung since the last Holy Saturday of the past year<sup>1</sup>.

And peace was close at hand, for on April 17th, 1555, it was agreed, as the main provisions of treaty, that the Emperor, on acquiring Siena, would leave her or grant her anew her liberty, giving a general pardon to all but the rebels against himself and Cosimo. A garrison paid by Charles was to be quartered in Siena, but no fortress might be built, and, though the Emperor might modify the government, certain magistracies must be left untouched. Any citizen who pleased might leave Siena, always excepting the rebels. The Sienese protested that these restrictions were too severe, and the question was tacitly allowed to drop, so that very many of the citizens—whether explicitly rebels or no—were able to leave Siena, distrusting as they did the assurances of amnesty. The French troops were to march out with colours flying, taking their weapons and private possessions. And, on April 21st, Marignano set in order his men in their best array to watch Monluc's exit. It was a pitiful sight although a gallant one, for his Gascon troops were few in number and worn out with privation and the four divisions of Italian soldiers were probably in no better plight. Even the unfeeling Marignano was stirred at the sight. Cornelio Bentivoglio, leading the infantry, lowered his pike on coming before the Marchese, but he bade him shoulder it again and complimented him on his courage and endurance.

With the troops came many citizens who took their way, sad and broken-hearted, to the hill-town of

<sup>1</sup> Sozzini, *op. cit.* p. 418.

Montalcino, at no great distance from Siena, fondly but vainly trying to believe that there the republic still existed in miniature. Marignano meantime, with nothing but hatred to greet him, entered Siena and heard the Mass of the Holy Spirit in the Cathedral. It was "with great difficulty brought to its end, there being more sound of sobbing and of weeping among those who sang and in part among those who listened, than of music<sup>1</sup>."

Cosimo, acting more on his own initiative than was appreciated by Charles, had hastened to put the government into the hands of those citizens whom he least suspected, and was doing his best to mollify the soreness of heart felt in the town, giving strict orders to keep the Spanish garrison from insolence to the citizens. Yet the bread which was now brought in by pack-mules was bitter eating to the Sienese who, for all their sufferings, were not even rid of the hated Spaniards and had every reason to fear that deliverance from these would mean subjection to the Duke of Florence. For the moment it helped them but little that the latter was under the Emperor's displeasure. Charles' ministers accused Cosimo of protecting the Sienese to cover his own ambitious designs, so that the Emperor refused to ratify the newly made treaty and bitterly blamed Don Francisco de Toledo and Don Juan Manrique who had been sent to Florence and had allowed the Duke to exceed his powers. Cosimo was weary to death of the whole matter:

"If your Majesty," he wrote, "is fain to use clemency towards the Sienese, . . . you can restore their former true liberty; if you desire them as subjects, you can reform the Government at your pleasure . . . if you wish to use rigour, you can dispose at will of the public monies, and if 'tis blood you call for, be content to think that in this war, in this one city, there have died from hunger and from the sword, more than ten thousand inhabitants; that the country-side

<sup>1</sup> Cini, *op. cit.* p. 333.

is utterly desolate, and that for many years there will be none to till the land<sup>1</sup>."

That had happened, in fact, which Cosimo had from the first foreseen would occur if the war were pressed but languidly. The Emperor, whether conscious that Cosimo spoke justly, or fearing lest he should lose his most faithful ally in Italy (as the Duke described himself) in any case moderated his anger and left Cosimo to go his own way, only nominating Don Francisco de Toledo as Governor of Siena. This, however, was but a temporary arrangement, and it was abundantly clear that before long the Duke of Florence would be master there *de jure* as well as *de facto*. Charles was further unwilling to alienate Cosimo, since a conclave was in progress, always a critical moment to French and Imperialists in Italy. Julius III had died "leaving it as the common opinion" (so Galluzzi succinctly states) "that he had been of no use to anyone whatsoever<sup>2</sup>." He had, however, been peaceably inclined towards Cosimo (a welcome change after Paul III's hostility) and had so far justified Bishop Giovio's prophecy "that from this mount (Monte)<sup>3</sup>... we need expect nothing violent, but rather milk and honey and sugar<sup>4</sup>."

But, after the brief days of Marcellus, the fiery Paul IV was elected (in May, 1555) whose loathing for heretics was only equalled by his hatred for Spain. This meant, to Cosimo, the encouragement of the Florentine exiles in Rome, who seized the opportunity of tearing down the *palle* on S. Giovanni de' Fiorentini, and of putting up instead a Marzocco<sup>5</sup> with the words: *Sen: Pop. q. Flor.* The Pope for his part told his niece, Duchess Eleonora, that she ought to wear black, for her husband was a *figlio del diavolo*<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Galluzzi, *op. cit.* vol. II p. 97.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 98

<sup>3</sup> Julius' family name was del Monte.

<sup>4</sup> Firenze, *Arch. di Stato, Mediceo, Carteggio dei Segretari.*

<sup>5</sup> The Florentine lion.

<sup>6</sup> Galluzzi, *op. cit.* vol. II. pp. 107, 109.

However, before Paul IV had shown of what he was capable in his desire to thwart Spain, Charles V had abdicated. Tenacious as ever, Charles, even while renouncing power in his own person, tried to make sure of Siena, by granting the investiture of it to Philip: yet such an action, it must have been clear, would have turned Cosimo in grim earnest into an enemy, and one perhaps more formidable than even the Spanish power in Italy could easily have withstood. On Philip's accession, therefore, some such reflections induced the Spanish ministers to follow a more friendly policy. There being Philip II to deal with instead of Charles V, the habitual delays of Spanish negotiations were bound to increase and intrigue to be rife; wearisome hesitations and fruitless skirmishes between French, Spanish and Florentine troops, with an occasional diversion caused by the appearance of a Turkish sail, filled up the next two years. It was not till 1557 that Don Juan de Figheroa, as representative of Philip II, ratified the cession of Siena to Cosimo, he and his descendants holding the city and its territory as a Spanish fief. The Duke of Florence was bound to contribute four thousand infantry to the defence of the Kingdom of Naples or the Duchy of Milan if they were attacked by a league numbering Italian princes, while Spain was to give him troops to aid in driving the French out of Tuscany. A perpetual offensive and defensive alliance was declared between the Kings of Spain and the Dukes of Florence. Among other less important conditions it was stipulated that by this cession of territory Philip must be considered to have discharged his debts towards Cosimo in full. And the sweet cup of conquest was not without more than a dash of bitterness, for by the treaty Cosimo was left with Spanish garrisons for ever in his land. The coast towns of Portercote, Talamone, Monte Argentario, Orbetello and Porto Santo Stefano, were reserved to

Spain in whose hands they remained, known as the Presidi Spagnuoli, and were eventually incorporated in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies.

On the 19th July, 1557, towards the 21st hour, Don Juan de Figheroa solemnly handed over Siena in the name of Philip of Spain to Don Luis de Toledo as Procurator of the Duke of Florence, to whom all the magistrates swore allegiance. It went off very quietly, and the people at last were free from the insolence of the Spaniards within their walls and the harryings of the French outside. After three years they could visit their villas again in safety. Now indeed began such days of peace as Siena had never known before, and that once turbulent republic became a tranquil and on the whole a thriving provincial town. Irresponsibly unruly as the republic of Siena had ever been, her downfall was inevitable, and it was in truth a kind fate which saved her from the Duke of Ferrara, from papal nephews (whether Farnesi or Caraffa) and, last but not least, from a Spanish Governor. The states of Ferrara and Parma, the provinces of Milan and the Kingdom of Naples could boast no such good rulers as Siena under Cosimo and his successors, in whose hands the government of Siena was almost always creditable. That the republic must fall was plain even to contemporaries, one of whom wrote:

According to the tenour of the capitulation it seems as if Siena were to preserve her liberty, but many fear her perpetual servitude, the which, in the opinion of some that are reputed wise, 'tis yet thought will, in course of time, prove more to their profit than her little understood and worse guarded liberty<sup>1</sup>.

Time did indeed heal the smart of humiliation, and not very long after the cession of Siena some of her citizens returned from Montalcino, where the new Sienese Republic, under Monluc's rule, had gone through troubled days. Some, again, consoled them-

<sup>1</sup> Dionigio Atanagi in *Lettere di Principi*, vol. III. p. 164.

selves with the reflection that the Florentines were if anything worse off than they, since none of the Duke's proverbial severity was shown to Siena, and many old customs and institutions were suffered to last on. To Messer Angiolo Niccolini, nominated Lieutenant General and Governor of Siena and its state, Cosimo wrote:

Rigour is indeed good, but not always, nor does it please us that the prisons should be full; only those who are in truth ill-doers should be punished, and thus the well-doers will love us; but if ye are severe with those that are less guilty and those that are led astray by men of evil nature, all will look on us with scorn, and we have need of being loved. I commend this people to you<sup>1</sup>.

In fact, as time went on, one is almost tempted to think that (paradoxical as it may sound) the Sienese except for the grievous hurt to their pride and independence, gained more from their defeat than the triumphant Duke of Florence from his victory. Philip II had bound him far closer to Spain than before, now that he did homage for part of his dominions and, with all his ingenuity, could scarcely in future escape some obligations to the Spanish crown. The days of playing off France against the Emperor were past, and past, too, the heavy claims on Charles' or Philip's gratitude for the money with which Cosimo had so opportunely supplied them, and for which he reckoned one day on a return with interest. Philip was now in the most unusual and pleasant position of being free from all debts in at least one quarter, while Cosimo, as Galluzzi justly points out, found himself with a treasury unwontedly empty, possessor of a territory which did not yield as much as 50,000 ducats and, cruelly wasted as it was, would swallow up large sums before it could be the least productive in future. Even the glory which, in his own day, came to him with his increased possessions and the new title of *Senarum Dux*,

<sup>1</sup> Cantini, *op. cit.* p. 621.

has, in our time, come to be reckoned almost his shame. And rightly so, for even if Cosimo was not directly responsible for all the cruelties of the war, even if he tried in some degree to check them, yet his name can never be dissociated from that of the blood-thirsty Marignano, and such association brings with it its own condemnation. Yet let us not forget that the memory of Queen Elizabeth is justly dear to the English and her fame justly high, although in her reign and not wholly without her knowledge such horrors were inflicted on the Irish as make the sufferings of the Sienese seem a trifle. This, too, was the age of the cruelties in the Low Countries (to mention but the Spanish Fury alone) and, if I dwell on such instances, it is merely in order to suggest that, here as ever, a man must be judged by the standards of his own age if we wish to estimate his character with any approach to fairness, and are not content with labelling him as despotic, treacherous and cruel. Surely the time has passed for writing in the style of 1848, when the word prince connoted vice, and that of republic, virtue.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE DOMINATION OF SPAIN—THE DUCAL FAMILY IN THE PALAZZO VECCHIO—COSIMO IN ROME—DEATHS OF GIOVANNI AND GARZIA

FOR some years longer war, or rather petty skirmishing, dragged on in Tuscany, where discord was kept alive by the French garrison in the little fortress of Montalcino. But the gravity of the outlook in France after the battle of S. Quentin (August 10th, 1557) disposed the King to peace, and Cosimo, for his part, was never slow to urge the need for quiet in Italy. The surprising turn of events which brought the Duke of Alva into the Roman Campagna at the head of an army to attack the Pope need not detain us, but it is characteristic of Cosimo that he acted as mediator between the two, with a slight leaning to the side of Spain. Another point of some interest is his *rapprochement* with Ferrara. The wearisome question of precedence had been settled in Cosimo's favour and now it seemed to the Duke that Spain needed to be held in check, whence came proposals of marriage between Alfonso d'Este, heir of Duke Ercole of Ferrara, and Lucrezia, daughter of Cosimo. Noteworthy is a letter written by the Duke of Florence urging Ercole to give up his prejudice in favour of France and turn to the side of Spain, pointing out clearly that either of these great powers would, without scruple, sacrifice an Italian prince to their own interests. But if Ferrara would stand by Florence, Medici and Este together could control the Pope; the forces of Milan or Naples could not injure them if they were secure in their own states and, thus united, they would

1557-60

be less at the beck and call of rulers beyond the Alps.

"With these princes," he wrote, "it behoves us so to act as to keep their ends well in view, and to aid each other and warn each other, and to oppose their unjust measures, so as we be not moved by love of Spain or of France, but by the general good of Italy, our country<sup>1</sup>."

This was a rare note and a high note to strike, but Cosimo did in truth aim at freeing his own states, as far as might be, from Spanish domination, though outside Tuscany the prevailing apathy was too great for him to stir, except for a moment. Neither Cosimo's wise counsels, nor Paul IV's impetuous resistance could long hinder the slow absorption of Italy by Spain.

This did at least bring some peace to the distracted country, for, in 1559, the peace of Cateau-Cambrésis put an end for many years to come to French rule in Italy. Little Montalcino had to give up its brave struggle for independence, and when, after final difficulties, the French troops marched out, fifty children with branches of olive acclaimed the new prince, shouting *Palle, palle*. The centre of gravity had shifted, and, for the next two hundred years and more, the battlefields of Europe were to be across the Alps; a change which necessarily made the political history of Italy comparatively insignificant. Cosimo increased in power and influence for some years to come, but as his wealth and importance grew, so did the hatred of the neighbouring states. With the Popes alone he was habitually on good terms, for, though Venice and Genoa, Ferrara and Parma were never open enemies, there was a sullen smouldering jealousy of this new prince whose power was waxing while theirs, they dully felt, was on the wane. Before we consider the new spirit abroad in

<sup>1</sup> Galluzzi, *op. cit.* vol. II. p. 188.

Italy in the days of the Counter-Reformation, we will, however, turn again to the private side of Cosimo's life and give some account of his surroundings in Florence.

As early as the spring of 1540, Cosimo had moved from the family house in Via Larga to the Palazzo Vecchio, which for twenty years was his home.<sup>1540-60</sup> Only his declining days, as we may truly consider them, were spent in the Palazzo Pitti, for, only two years after he settled there, he lost his one true companion and friend, Eleonora. The dull stateliness of the building might indeed serve as a symbol of the Duke's outwardly increased splendour which poorly compensated for his inward loss of vigour and interest in life. But we may first linger over the more cheerful years, from 1550 to 1560 or thereabouts, when the air was full of projects and possibilities for the sons and daughters growing up in the Palazzo Vecchio—by no means so dreary and dismal an abode as some writers would have us believe. In truth, a southerner prefers that subdued light in the house which to our northern eyes is gloomy, and, though the apartments of the Duchess were on the warm and sunny side of the palazzo, the rooms no doubt were darkened more often than not. But at least the leaded window-frames opened on a piazza full of life and bustle, as it is now, and the rooms were furnished with all the comfort, and still more with all the magnificence, to be had in that day. In Eleonora's favourite room, the corner one<sup>1</sup> that looks on the piazza and the Uffizi (the long arcades of which were not yet begun) we can still see the painting on the ceiling of Penelope at her web—a discouraging theme for the ladies embroidering below. There, too, in more than one angle of the frieze we can decipher

<sup>1</sup> Conti, *op. cit.* p. 59.

the arms of Toledo (checky, azure and argent). But we can only imagine the leather hangings of stamped gold and silver and purple, the armchairs of green velvet, the firescreens of walnut wood. Yet the mere sight of the fine old rooms inspires us to picture how once they looked in all their bravery. Here we still see the heavy beams with a faded touch of colour and gilding, the tiled and tessellated floors of charming design, the deep embrasures of the windows, the ducal arms and emblems, here worked in tarsia on a door or window-shutter, here carved in high relief, here painted on a vaulted ceiling. By degrees we can in our mind's eye supply the lacking details, such as "hangings of cloth of gold and crimson satin with gold ornamentation... with fringes of silk and silver and lined with crimson cloth<sup>1</sup>." These braveries gave a sumptuous air to the Duke's bedroom, and the bed itself was of "walnut wood, ornamented with gold, and with four gilded pine cones...", the bed-hangings were of "gold damask, the design alike on both sides, half of purple silk and half of crimson silk with five curtains," and the tester was of cloth "lined with taffetas in the Ducal colours, with a fringe of gold and red silk." But this splendour, which verges on the gaudy, seems not to have been for every-day use, since we read that next door was the room in which, as is conjectured, the Duke usually slept. This was more soberly hung with green and blue leather, not without gold ornaments and borders. The Medici *palle* (unheraldically gilt) gave an added touch of colour to the bed furniture which included curtains of gold and red and purple silk, lined with red taffetas. Though Cosimo dressed in subdued colours, he seems to have chosen bright decoration for his rooms, and yet perhaps the general effect of these rich stamped leather hangings was not inharmonious, for the tints were eastern and their tone was pure.

<sup>1</sup> For all these details *vide* Conti, *op. cit.* pp. 59 *et seq.*



DINING ROOM IN THE PALAZZO VECCHIO

*Photo Brogi*



Tapestries were still a rarity, though a letter of 1542 speaks of an arras "with the Story of Tobias<sup>1</sup>" intended for their Excellencies' bedroom, or it may have been that Eleonora preferred the old style; in any case, she refused to have the history of Tobias in her room, and we read that it was not till 1560 that tapestries were used in the ducal apartments. Then, with a sudden outburst, cartoons were given to the weavers portraying the histories of David and Solomon and Cyrus, as well as one which ambitiously symbolised the Life of Man<sup>2</sup>.

In the small dining room of the Ducal apartments is still to be seen a marble *lavabo* which gives a sense of coolness, and on the frieze of the walls are visible, a little faded, the *amorini* supporting the letters of Eleonora's name. Here the Duke and Duchess would sup on private occasions and here we may picture him seated in the heavy oaken chair enjoying a frugal meal. He was wont in the house to wear "a long robe reaching to the ground, of velvet or some other material suited to the season, and most commonly black but all worked in gold; slippers on his feet and a sword at his side. In eating," adds our author, "as in all other things, he showed moderation and composure and exquisite cleanliness<sup>3</sup>." He cared little, Manucci tells us, for choice drinks (*splendide bevande*), and was most sober both in eating and drinking. "In his last years he often-times...had but one meal a day<sup>4</sup>." Almost always he had someone to eat with him seated at the foot of the table, and several Florentine gentlemen, "such as Messer Alamanno Salviati his uncle, Pandolfo Pucci, Leone Nerli his cousin and Piero di Gino Capponi<sup>5</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Pietro Camaiani, Firenze, *Arch. di Stato, Mediceo, Carteggio dei Segretari*, Nov. 13th, 1542.

<sup>2</sup> Conti, *op. cit.* p. 37.

<sup>3</sup> Mellini, *Ricordi...del...Granduca Cosimo*, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Manucci, *op. cit.* p. 228.

<sup>5</sup> Mellini, *op. cit.* p. 6.

And at these meals which, in the best years of Cosimo's life, were so simple, so much after the old Florentine tradition, the talk was at least free from scandal and harsh speaking. Cosimo, unlike many of his countrymen, was no great talker, a man of few but pithy words and moreover modest in his speech. "He never was wont in speaking of himself, to say *we* but always *I*, and to all others (save to a few of his household servants) he used to say *you*<sup>1</sup>." And again, whatever Cosimo felt for his enemies, he made it his practice to speak evil of no one. "He spoke no ill," more than one writer reports, and would hear none from others; "even when the talk ran on Piero Strozzi, he would speak of him not as a foe but a friend, calling him a great Captain<sup>2</sup>." But this, I think, cannot have been during the war with Siena.

When he was in Florence the Duke, as a rule, rose at dawn, and would himself read and answer letters, whether to princes or private citizens, allowing no one but himself to read such papers, making notes on others for his secretaries. And, speaking of secretaries, it may be added in passing that here in the palazzo the secretaries' room was far from luxurious, being furnished with "three desks, two brass lamps, two benches and four large stone inkstands,"—a scheme of furnishing which certainly gave no encouragement to lounging. But, in spite of the splendour of cloth of gold hangings and velvet-covered chairs, their Excellencies' own rooms were probably little more comfortable, ease being the last thing attainable in a palace of the Cinquecento.

The Duke, having attended to his most pressing business, went to mass, which it was his custom to hear daily either at the church of the Santissima Annunziata or in the Cathedral, where no cushions or carved prie-

<sup>1</sup> Mellini, *op. cit* p. 9, *i.e.*, was neither haughty nor familiar.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 8.

dieu distinguished his seat from that of the citizens<sup>1</sup>. For his health's sake he often went on foot in the town; at other times he would ride about the streets on a small pony, in order that even so his subjects could talk with him without difficulty or hand him petitions. For many years he wore a coat of mail under his doublet, and, during Piero Strozzi's raid on Tuscany, an unwonted sight was seen on S. John Baptist's Day; the Duke surrounded by an armed German guard. But those were evil days, and Cosimo as a rule rode or walked in Florence unguarded, though armed with sword and dagger—a stern figure. The Venetian ambassador, writing a few years later, noted that:

moreover...by having observed strict justice, equal towards all men,...he hath so well settled his affairs that now he needs fear nothing, but lives a free life as if he had offended no man and goes about within and without the city alone in his coach, with but a single lacquey<sup>2</sup>.

In the brief intervals of business, Cosimo often played tennis with his *camerieri* "and if he lost to them he paid, but if he won he would not have them pay<sup>3</sup>." In summer he delighted in swimming and would stay for hours in the water, or if there was time for a longer expedition, would amuse himself by fishing, alone and unarmed. "In the little stream of the Sieve, which flows into the valley of the Mugello, he would," says an old author, "catch various fish, such as trout, and would divide his haul among his courtiers and watch them with great delight as they ate the fish which they had cooked in the neighbouring meadows, he himself lying on the grass<sup>4</sup>."

Solitary and reserved Cosimo ever was and often, when grave matters were on his mind, he would ride or

<sup>1</sup> Reumont, *Geschichte Toscana's*, vol. I. p. 252.

<sup>2</sup> Albèri, *op. cit* vol. I. serie II. p. 61.

<sup>3</sup> Mellini, *op. cit* p. II.

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*, p. 68 (Cabriana's description).

walk alone, the better to meditate. But his lightest, most accessible moments were those when he put aside for awhile the heavy thoughts which deepened the frown on his forehead and jested with his gentlemen and attendants. For then, says another Venetian envoy:

he lays aside all authority and dignity and with great intimacy jests familiarly with all, and desires that all should use this freedom towards him... but once the time for amusement is past, he recognises no one, and 'tis as if he had neither seen nor known them, nor is any bold enough to make the least sign of familiarity and he at once withdraws into his accustomed severity, so much so that there runs a saying in the city that he doffs and dons the Duke when he pleases (*sì disduca e s' induca quando vuole*)<sup>1</sup>.

Many a vivid glimpse of Cosimo, now friendly, now unapproachable, is given by Benvenuto Cellini, and, remembering Benvenuto's habitual violence of speech and impatience of the least hindrance or check, the Duke rather gains than loses by this record of his lighter moments. He here appears more genial than his wont, taking Benvenuto's frankness in surprisingly good part, and treating him with more generosity than he is sometimes credited with. Tempting as the subject is, Benvenuto's *Autobiography* is too well known to be quoted and we will return to the Palazzo Vecchio and the children growing up there. One passage alone may be recalled, which, in a few words, gives a pleasant picture of an interior:

While I was working at these bagatelles, the Prince<sup>2</sup> and Don Giovanni and Don Arnando<sup>3</sup> and Don Garzia kept always hovering round me, whenever the Duke's eyes were turned. I begged them for mercy's sake to hold their peace. They answered: "That we cannot do." I told them: "What one cannot is required of no one! So have your will! Along with you!" At this both the Duke and Duchess burst out laughing<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Albèri, *op. cit.* vol. i. serie ii. p. 349.

<sup>2</sup> I.e. Francesco

<sup>3</sup> Ferdinand was long Arnando or Ernando to the Florentines who could not grow used to the Spanish name

<sup>4</sup> *The Life of Benvenuto Cellini*, translated by J. A. Symonds (1899).

These four little boys may have had a merry life and at least in the palace itself were allowed some freedom, though Arnando, when Benvenuto wrote of him in 1553, was only four years old. But their sisters, Maria, Isabella and Lucrezia, were brought up strictly in the Spanish fashion and hardly ever allowed out of doors. Thus it is not surprising that Maria, said to have been a charming sweet-natured girl, was very delicate and died when she was but seventeen (in 1557) of what was described as malignant fever. For she lived shut up with her sisters and her ladies in the part of the palazzo assigned to them, where no one else entered but their confessor, their old physician and their masters<sup>1</sup>. In the country the children occasionally went out, but in Florence the citizens had only seen Maria three or four times in the seventeen years that she lived in the heart of the town. "In these parts," writes a servant of Alfonso d'Este to his master, "there is little pleasure at court, for there must be no jesting with the ladies in waiting, and these ladies (*i.e.* the Duchess and her daughters) are never seen, save when they go riding, and then one can talk but little with them<sup>2</sup>."

But Maria, his eldest child, was specially dear to Cosimo. On her death he shut himself up alone on the *terrazza* of the Castello at Livorno where she had died, and there bitterly wept for her loss. The enclosed life, he was convinced, had caused her death. "Her constitution," he said, not without justice, "was like mine, and she had need to enjoy fresh air." All his life her father kept in his rooms a portrait of her with her device, a halcyon, and the motto: *Mulcere dedit fluctus et tollere ventos*<sup>3</sup>.

The same unhealthy bringing up was probably responsible for the death of Lucrezia, nearly a year

<sup>1</sup> G. E. Saltini, *Tragedie Medicee domestiche* (Firenze, 1898), p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 64.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, p. 27.

after her marriage to Alfonso d'Este, when only in her seventeenth year. The little terrace garden in the Palazzo Vecchio where Eleonora kept her rare plants and flowers was a confined place of exercise, and the hollow perforated globes set about in the rooms to diffuse a pleasant scent were a poor substitute for the fresh air which was denied the children, especially if one reflects on the elementary sanitation of the day. Rumour, however, spoke vaguely of poison in the case of Lucrezia—it was, as Mr Armstrong says, “unfashionable, a sign of unimportance<sup>1</sup>,” to die a natural death. As for Maria, a circumstantial legend eventually was evolved according to which she had had an intrigue with one of the pages, and this coming to the ears of the Duke, he ordered her to be poisoned<sup>2</sup>.

Cosimo, in fact, was now a powerful and much hated man. His specially vindictive enemies, the Florentine exiles (bitter in proportion to their impotence), seem to have beguiled the idle hours of which they had so many by inventing every sort of abominable calumny about the Duke and his sons and daughters. He was successively accused of having poisoned one daughter and—more hateful yet—of having seduced a second. After this the murder of his son seems almost a venial action, having the excuse of ungovernable anger. Signor Saltini, indeed, has fully disproved these monstrous charges and refuted them in detail; serious historians in the past have not believed them; contemporary writers such as Benvenuto Cellini have reported the facts correctly; the well-known Vincenzo Borghini, rector of the Foundling Hospital, a close friend of Vasari, wrote in the same vein. And yet, so firmly do such lurid stories take possession of the popular imagination that their falsehood can scarcely be too often dwelt on. When it has once been realised

<sup>1</sup> *The French Wars of Religion* (1892), p. 87.

<sup>2</sup> Saltini, *op. cit.* p. 54.



*Giorgio Vasari*

*Photo Brogi*

GIOVANNI E GARZIA DE' MEDICI  
From a picture in the Palazzo Vecchio



that Cosimo was in truth an affectionate father and husband it is not easy to grasp by what process he suddenly was transformed into a cold-blooded homicide, and worse. But to the distorted view of the Florentine exiles with whom he had begun as a Tiberius, nothing may have seemed impossible. From the first they twisted and distorted events and rumours to Cosimo's discredit, thus in the end enveloping him in an atmosphere of sinister suspicion, harder to dispel even than their definite accusations:

"Did an evil suspicion come into their heads," writes Signor Saltini, "it was at once noised abroad as if it were true,...and improved on and exaggerated, and in the end notes were taken of it, reference made to it in news-sheets, in recollections, in letters written to relations and friends, or even to people of importance, to ministers of princes and to princes themselves. Thus by degrees was accumulated the pitiful material out of which, for want of more trustworthy documents (which then were jealously guarded), the attempt was made to write history<sup>1</sup>."

One half wonders how many of their tales the exiles thought would be believed. And indeed, at the time, they seem mainly to have fallen on deaf ears; it was reserved for the makers of chronicles in the seventeenth century to gull their more credulous readers.

But before the saddest days of Cosimo's life had come, there was a gay and splendid interval on which we may now dwell. We take up the story in the year 1560-62 1560, when his three eldest sons, Francesco, Giovanni and Garzia were promising youths. Vincenzo Fedeli, the Venetian ambassador, writing the following year describes the Duke as living quiet and retired. "Of old he used great magnificence in all things," but now lived less like a prince than like the father of a family, and always ate in the company of his wife and sons and daughters, with a table simply

<sup>1</sup> Saltini, *op. cit.* p. lvii.

decked. His sons had no separate table or independent court and when he went to the country “where the Duke goes, go his wife and his sons and daughters and all the household<sup>1</sup>. ”

Francesco was in these early days thought a promising youth, and no pains were spared over his education. He spoke and wrote Latin correctly, and was a fair Greek scholar. Unluckily for him, he learnt as well as the Spanish tongue, Spanish arrogance and haughtiness, of all things the most distasteful to his subjects who accused him of being a Spaniard and not an Italian. In fact, Francesco took after his mother in none but her bad qualities and turned out a poor specimen of a duke. In spite of his father’s efforts to train him in habits of industry and application to affairs of state, Francesco never was interested in anything but devices to kill time. Whether his two brothers would also have disappointed expectations, none can tell; yet it seems plain that they were more loved by their parents and gave promise of better qualities than he. Garzia, now nearly fifteen, was his mother’s favourite, a high-spirited vivacious boy, whom his father first meant to be a soldier: later, having founded his Order of S. Stefano in 1562 for warfare against the Turks, he destined him for a naval career. But, in 1560, the hopes and the interests of the family centred on Giovanni, newly made Cardinal by the lately elected Pope, Pius IV. Giovanni was only seventeen, but the decrees of the Council of Trent had little force against the pressure of political considerations. Cosimo, intimate as he was with the Medici Pope who claimed an imaginary kinship with him, had little difficulty in carrying out his wish to have a son in the Sacred College, who would further his interests at the papal court. Giovanni, for the rest, showed himself prudent and staid beyond his years, and seemed well fitted for the vocation chosen

<sup>1</sup> Albèri, *op. cit.* vol. i. serie ii. p. 351.

for him. In March, 1560, he was sent to Rome, and Vasari who accompanied him had something to say of the journey to his constant correspondent, the head of the Foundling Hospital in Florence:

The tale of the folk at Colle, who instead of crying *palle, palle*, called out *papa, papa*<sup>1</sup> you will know.... As for this priest at Monte Oliveto, I say nought, for this court was like to have eaten the provisions of the whole chapter, if gifts had not rained down on us. But at Pienza 'twas a pretty sight, for fifty little boys (who might have been yours) with garlands of olive on their heads and branches of olive in their hands, all clad in white shirts,... came to meet us. But the barrels of wine from Montalcino pleased me and the sackfuls of mushrooms, which made us travel like so many abbots.... At Rome our entry is to be truly pontifical (*sarà pontificalissima*)<sup>2</sup>. (Bolsena, March 24th, 1560.)

In Rome, where he stayed three months, Giovanni won golden opinions, his modesty, self-possession and equable temper giving great satisfaction, and even the Florentine exiles courted him in the hope of winning Cosimo's favour. Nothing was neglected on the part of Pius which could do him honour. He had already sent him his own Cardinal's hat and despatched a special chamberlain to Florence to bring the biretta<sup>3</sup>. He also desired that in Giovanni his own title of Cardinal de' Medici should be revived, although he would naturally have been styled the Cardinal of Florence. Giovanni was lodged, Galluzzi tells us, in the Palazzo Pontificio, and the second letter from Vasari gives us some details of his arrival (as pontifical, let us hope, as he had anticipated). Two Cardinals, writes Giorgio:

put him in a coach and carried him in the evening to the Pope, who received him with great affection, using kindly words which the Cardinal returned with such gentleness that the Pope twice kissed

<sup>1</sup> Possibly with a hint that Giovanni might one day be Pope.

<sup>2</sup> Gaye, *Carteggio inedito degli artisti dei secoli XIV, XV & XVI*, vol. III. (Firenze, 1840), p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> Albèri, *op. cit.* vol. X serie II. p. 55. *Relazione de L. Mocenigo, tornato da Roma nel 1560.*

him.... In the morning... he was visited by the Cardinals in state, and the first was Strozzi<sup>1</sup>. He [Giovanni] went through all the ceremonies so well that all were amazed and it seemed as he had been a Cardinal ten years. Thus, by his gracious bearing, he hath enslaved all the city<sup>2</sup>.

In spite of this, Giovanni's head does not seem to have been turned, judging from letters written by him to Francesco during this visit, in which he evidently longs for home. Though they show no strong individuality, these letters at least indicate a pleasant disposition and brotherly affection:

"I have infinite pleasure," he writes, "in hearing of the agreeable diversion you have had, as well as the Signora Donna Isabella, the Signor Paolo and the Signor Don Luigi<sup>3</sup>, and rejoice to have been in such fair company at least in memory, until I am suffered to be there in person, which of all things I desire. I pray God that the time of my return (fixed by his Excellency to be when S. Peter's Day is passed) will soon come. And do you in the meantime still keep me in memory, for, for all I am in Rome, yet I am ill content away from you.... There have been full many Concistories these past days. Yet, for all that they are wearisome, I, by the grace of God, am very well. Last Sunday I dined with Cardinal Farnese in the Vineyard which once belonged to Clement of blessed memory, and which is now owned by Madama di Parma<sup>4</sup>; a pleasant place, shady and with fountains, where we, moreover, supped and passed the day pleasantly enough...."<sup>5</sup> (Rome, June 18th, 1560.)

But after a few months his importance in Rome was eclipsed by the presence of his father. It was many years since Cosimo had left his own states. Pius IV, however, who did not merely flatter him, but had a real respect for his judgment, greatly desired to see him,

<sup>1</sup> Lorenzo, brother of Piero, who had lately, owing to Pius' good offices, been restored to favour.

<sup>2</sup> *Le Opere di Vasari*, vol. viii. (ed. Milanesi, 1882).

<sup>3</sup> Giovanni probably refers to his sister Isabella and her husband, Paolo Giordano Orsini, and as I conjecture, to their uncle, Don Luis de Toledo.

<sup>4</sup> *I.e.* Clement VII and Margaret of Austria. The property referred to is on Monte Mario and still known as Villa Madama.

<sup>5</sup> *Lettere del Cardinale Giovanni de' Medici, figlio di Cosimo I* (Roma, MDCLII), p. 106.

intending among other matters, to discuss the question of resuming the suspended sittings of the Council of Trent. This fitted in well with the Duke's own wish to visit Siena and take possession in person, and towards the end of October, he set out with his wife and three sons in great state. Whatever the feelings of the Sienese they did not fail to do honour to the new Duke, consoling themselves with the reflection that they had never had a quarrel with the house of Medici, and that it was better to be subject to a Duke than to a Republic. Cosimo on his entry wore a suit of grey, gold-embroidered, the collar of the Golden Fleece round his neck. The bay he rode was richly caparisoned; the Duchess, mounted on a white horse, was clad in a gown of white velvet, also gold-embroidered, and sprinkled with jewels. The rear was brought up by a troop of red-coated cavalry, from whose broad-brimmed hats drooped long purple feathers, while from their lance-points fluttered a pennon with the ducal colours, green, yellow and purple<sup>1</sup>. As Cosimo entered the gates which had so long resisted him he was met by a hundred Sienese youths of gentle birth each of whom offered an olive branch, and as they followed the Florentine banner shouted: *Palle, palle.* "Bas-reliefs and inscriptions proclaimed Medicean exploits; a statue of Noah spouted out wine which was greedily drunk by the people; the comedy of Ortensia was acted and the traditional horse race was run<sup>2</sup>." Five years of most unwonted peace had perhaps done something to soften the hearts of the Sienese, and the people who so much appreciated the fountain running wine no doubt were ready to applaud their new ruler. Cosimo did not stay long to enjoy their acclamations, but, leaving Francesco to be the rather nominal Governor of Siena, moved on towards Rome.

<sup>1</sup> *Rassegna Nazionale*, 1886 (June), p. 449.

<sup>2</sup> Callegari, *op. cit.* p. 75.

Here he was received with every sort of honour and was lodged in the Vatican itself on the first floor, in the apartments known as those of Innocent VIII, whence he had access by a private winding stair to the Pope's own rooms. Cardinal Borromeo, the papal nephew, and Cardinal Vitelli came to meet him on his approach to the city, and in their train soon followed Cardinal Santafiore and the Cardinal of Ferrara (d'Este). On the evening of their arrival Eleonora's beautiful garments were specially commented on. Unusual as it was, the Pope received them that very evening (at the first hour of the night), and the Duchess in honour of the occasion wore a dress of cloth of gold, worked with embroidery of flowered velvet in various colours, while about her neck and on her head she had a quantity of large and beautiful pearls<sup>1</sup>.

Cosimo was admitted to the papal chapel, received in the Sala dei Re and in every point treated like a prince "wearing a royal crown<sup>2</sup>."

Nor was it all outward show, for Cosimo, by his prudence and moderation did much to calm the many discordant elements with which the Pope had to deal, such as the Farnesi, Gonzaga and Vitelli; the pacific Pius IV found in the Duke of Florence an able supporter of his efforts to bring peace to the troubled land. With the same intention of restoring quiet, much was done towards the re-opening of the Council of Trent, as to which Cosimo had always held strong views. For, though Pius IV was personally most acceptable to him, he had no great love for the papacy and saw in the Council the most successful means of curbing what he was fond of calling the "tyranny of the priests." In his close conversations with Pius, however, we may conjecture that the Duke dwelt more on the need for crushing heresy, the mere mention of which filled him

<sup>1</sup> *Rassegna Nazionale*, p. 453.

<sup>2</sup> Galluzzi, *op. cit.* vol. II. p. 284.

(like all his contemporaries) with a horror now incredible to us. It was a rare thing for an Italian prince to be so deep in the counsels of the Vatican, and Pasquino did not, as is well known, lose the opportunity of commenting on it: *Cosmus Medices*, said he, *Pontifex Maximus*.

Meantime, steady application to business and little exercise upset the Duke, who was detained in Rome by an illness so severe that it was rumoured he had been poisoned. Cardinal Giovanni, who seemed quite as ready to leave Rome as in the summer, was much disappointed by the delay. "The hope we had of leaving to-day was the cause of my not writing more often to your Excellency," he tells Francesco on November 26th. "Indeed methinks 'twould have come about shortly for certain, even if not now, had not the Signor Duca, mio Signore, yesterday had an attack of fever which therefore detained us...." On December 10th he wrote more cheerfully:

Yesterday his Excellency went to see his Holiness; to-day he hath gone out in his coach about Rome, and henceforth there is no need to write of him save as well and vigorous. We now await his wish to leave....I have heard with no little pleasure of the fine hunting and the pleasant diversions of your Excellency over yonder, and have all the more longing to come, so that I may myself share therein. And I think to come provided with a couple of hounds so fine and so good that your Excellency will haply agree they have not their match. I judge it likely we may go to the country-side of Pisa or ever we go to the Florentine. But at Siena, if it please God, we shall all see one another and pass a happy festival time<sup>1</sup>.

However, Giovanni's hopes of getting away before Christmas were disappointed, and perhaps it was chiefly Eleonora who felt a proud satisfaction at seeing her son, for all his youth, so dignified a small figure in his robes of a prince of the Church.

At last, early in 1561, the ducal party did set out northwards, the Pope showering splendid gifts on his

<sup>1</sup> *Lettere del Car. Giovanni de' Medici*, p. 272

departing guests; to Giovanni he gave his own palace and garden, to Eleonora the estates of the unfortunate Altoviti, with remainder to Garzia. As for the Duke, "he was presented with so many ancient monuments that they were shipped on four boats to Livorno<sup>1</sup>." Cosimo now visited the Val di Chiana and other parts of the Sienese territory which were still unknown to him. He also spent a month in Siena and there no doubt his sons made merry together, while their father pondered over such matters as the form of government best suited to the state and the necessary expenditure on fortifications for his new territory. He also examined the defences at Grosseto and Livorno, lingering moreover in the Maremma to enquire into the unhealthy state of the marshes. The long absence from Florence was not to end until Giovanni had made his state entry into Pisa as Archbishop, but the young Cardinal seems to have found these repeated journeyings wearisome, and he wrote a little dismally to Francesco:

I cannot tell your Excellency how this long tarrying in these *maremme*<sup>2</sup> weighs on me, for albeit there is some diversion in hunting, yet the pleasure cannot be such that it is not made to my thinking most imperfect by your absence, and be assured that I live continually vexed by lack of your society. We have this evening reached Massa, and as the Signor Duca our father hath resolved to go hunting to Vada, I was fain to write to your Excellency, not only to rouse your desire, but to invite and beg you (as I do with all my heart) to come ... and enjoy this diversion together with us. And this you can very well do without disturbing your Carnival amusements. (Massa, Feb. 9th, 1511.)

Giovanni was once more to visit the Maremma to his cost, but just now the family attention was diverted from him by the untimely death of his sister, Lucrezia. Only a year before Giovanni had gone with Francesco

<sup>1</sup> Galluzzi, *op. cit.* vol. II. p. 288. Galluzzi does not mention how the Altoviti possessions came into the hands of the Pope, but they probably passed to him on the death of his brother, the Marchese di Marignano.

<sup>2</sup> Maremma = low marshy land on the sea coast, pl. *maremme*.

to escort her on the journey to Ferrara, and now, she like Maria was gone. Lucrezia is indeed an entirely colourless figure, and even her wedding passed almost without comment. As for the union between Florence and Ferrara, it had scarcely been cemented before this event dissolved it.

Francesco was the next family preoccupation. He had resolved to go secretly to Spain, hoping rather unwisely that his father would condone this undutiful behaviour. He was, Galluzzi says, impatient of control, and as one may also conjecture, a little emulous of the Archbishop of Pisa, who had been installed on March 9th, and, although Francesco's junior, had a palace of his own and an existence at least comparatively independent. Cosimo fortunately had wind of Francesco's plan and, though no little angered by it, concealed his feelings and put a good face on the matter. Francesco, it was decided, had better see something of the world and must set out on his travels duly attended as became a young prince. He first went to Rome where he made a good impression on the amiable Pius, and was presented with a fine granite column from the Baths of Caracalla, which was eventually sent to Florence at his father's expense, and took nearly a year to get there.

Francesco meanwhile was on his way to Spain, and set off from Livorno on May 23rd, 1562, with a great retinue and six galleys to accompany him. In Spain, however, the son of the Duke of Florence was but one among many far more important grandes, and he by no means appreciated the experience. For a time all went smoothly, and Francesco's dignity was not ruffled, but in the end the good manners for which he was noted were not proof against his jealousy of Alessandro Farnese, Prince of Parma. Here was the old enemy of his house, in favour with Don Carlos and in general liked for his own qualities, whereas Francesco, small and dark, no better looking than most of his

family, cut a poor figure beside such a brilliant youth. The splendid suite of the Prince of Florence, the dinners he gave—in short his ostentation—roused envy among others, and when it came to an open dispute between Alessandro and Francesco, it was easy to foresee who would have the more support. Needless to say the quarrel arose over a question of precedence, and was thus reported to Cosimo by his ambassador, the Bishop of Fiesole:

The Prince of Florence having entered the chapel, and made his reverence to the Queen, went towards the altar and as he passed, greeted Parma. He, who was standing in his usual place, had left so much space above him that there was full room for another person there. Yet, when Florence entered the chapel (haply because those standing round saw that he desired the first place) he (Parma) moved little by little towards the end of the bench. And, when Florence had knelt down, he took all the space.

Thus, when the Prince of Florence rose, he saw not only that his place was taken, but “understood on what road Parma was walking. None the less, with great decorum, he turned to Parma and asked to have his place.” Parma made a gesture indicating that there was room below him. “At which gesture Florence replied in so many words that his was the first place.” And Parma: “‘Signore, this hath ever been my place.’ ‘Aye,’ replied Florence, ‘until I came, but now it is mine.’ Parma answered: ‘And who hath given it to your Excellency?’ ‘God,’ answered Florence, ‘as all the world knoweth.’ And hereupon politely drew near to take the place. No more was said, for the King was present, but the Duke of Alva intervened, and Philip bade the two young men both leave the chapel; Francesco in future heard mass elsewhere<sup>1</sup>. ” The incident, though nothing came of it, was not likely to cause any friendly feeling among Cosimo’s fellow-dukes in Italy. And, although Philip and Alva had

<sup>1</sup> *Archivio Storico Italiano*, vol. xi. 1883 G. E. Saltini, *L’Educazione del Principe Don Francesco de’ Medici*, p. 77.

acted prudently, the King himself was not very well disposed towards Cosimo, nor likely to be pleased by such conduct in his son. Francesco, indeed, excused himself gracefully with the King, but it was not an encouraging début, and Cosimo probably not for the first time wished that he saw more of Giovanni in Francesco. But his eldest and his youngest sons were never a credit to their family. Francesco had spent vast sums in Spain, and, what most annoyed his father, with little to show for it:

"To satisfy you," he wrote, "I have provided you with this sum. ....Nor doth it grieve me you should spend it, provided 'tis spent honourably; but I would have you bear in mind that whoso hath not of his own, 'tis an ill day for him if he puts himself at the mercy of another....Needs must thou learn and understand such things from me, for from others thou wilt not hear them; for all men seek to extort money, and then, as they find no more is to be had, there is little good will. And believe me, who have more than once been at such a pass. Be persuaded that the true way is to live honourably and strive to have somewhat of one's own, so that there be no need to seek favour of another; this is the true way to preserve one's estate and reputation and to find friends. All else is vanity<sup>1</sup>."

The advice was sound, if worldly, but fell on ears that heard little. Leaving the Prince of Florence, however, to acquire even more Spanish haughtiness than he had learnt from his mother, we must return to Tuscany and the autumn of 1562.

The Duke and his family set out as usual this year for the Maremma. Here the boys and their father  
<sup>1562</sup> would hunt and the Duchess, after accompanying them for a time, would be settled in Pisa for the winter where the milder climate was more suited to her health than that of Florence. This autumn the rain had not come and a great deal of sickness was prevalent, so that the Duke's physician urged prudence and strongly recommended that the expedition should be

<sup>1</sup> Saltini, *op. cit* p. 83.

given up. The boys, he added, were delicate and subject to fever. But Cosimo, like many another strong man, pooh-poohed the idea of danger and would not be dissuaded from going. For nearly a month they had been moving about, from place to place—along the Maremma to Grosseto, thence to Massa Marittima, Bibbona and finally to Rosignano, much as in the old days when the boys were babies and the Duchess young and vigorous. Finally, on the morning of November 15th, they were preparing to leave Rosignano for Livorno, when Giovanni, who had been overtired with hunting, began to shiver. Cosimo's own words will best describe what next befell<sup>1</sup>:

"The Cardinal your brother," he wrote sadly to Francesco in Spain, "was seized with malignant fever on the Sunday, being at Rosignano, and without saying aught (for all that I questioned him how he did) on the Monday came gaily and willingly to Livorno, on horseback, nor did any perceive that he was sick, nor did he himself yet feel it. On the Tuesday morning when we would have set out for Pisa, the fever was on him, and of such sort that in six hours he could not so much as turn in his bed.... On Friday night, at the twelfth hour he passed to another life, with all the resignation and recognition of God that a true Christian can show. And indeed this angel—for so I must call him—is now in such a place as I pray God I may come to when I am at that pass. He died," adds the Duke, "in my arms. Don Garzia and Don Ferdinando," he continues, "have still a little fever, but of no malignant sort, and they will be cured and I firmly believe 'tis no perilous sickness, and to-morrow we shall take them to Pisa. The sickness hath been general in Venice and in all Lombardy and many have died there; as many as seventy out of a hundred folk lie ill thereof in Florence, but few of them die."

This was written on November 20th or 21st, but Cosimo was then too hopeful, and on December 6th a fresh and much more serious bout of fever carried off Garzia also. Eleonora had suffered much under the shock of Giovanni's death, and now, in her weak state, this second and even heavier blow was too much for

<sup>1</sup> For these details and letters *vide* Galluzzi, *op. cit.* vol. III. pp. 21 *et seq.*, and Saltini, *Tragedie Medicee domestiche*, pp. 120 *et seq.*

her. On December 18th she too died, and with her, we may almost say, ended the good days of Cosimo's life. His letter to Francesco, for all its formal phrases of resignation, has a note of sincerity curiously observable in this man who is so often taxed with dissimulation and who none the less writes some of the most characteristic and trenchant letters of his day:

"Garzia," he says, "went to heaven. I say to heaven, because, not only did he accept death with the greatest constancy, but, like a San Paolino, two days before asked to confess and have Communion. .... That Angel of a Don Garzia your brother," he repeats, "asked for extreme unction with words such as should make every father long to have such Angels in the life eternal....dying thus with such a sense of gladness, as if this had been his wedding day, and with such a stedfast soul that it seemed as he were passing, not to death but to glory. But how can I end this letter, since I must needs tell you of a grief yet more sore."

Thus he goes on to tell Francesco of his mother's death. She had been terribly overcome by the loss of Giovanni; then followed Garzia's relapse, on which she could not sleep and was sadly anxious. Next, although not told of his death, "she was herself assured of it, whence it seemed best to tell her that he was gravely ill....and although his death was denied, she would not believe it." Full of this thought, "she refused to be guided by the physicians (as thou knowest was her wont) and, grieving and despairing, did worse than if she had known his death." Three days later, a violent fever seized her, after which she revived a little and ate a trifle more, prevailed on by Cosimo after she had for three days neither eaten nor slept, always coughing ("as thou knowest was her wont"). Then the fever returned; she made her will, asked for extreme unction, and then, wrote the Duke, "in my arms gave up her soul to God, having been fully conscious for two days and awaiting death with a crucifix almost always in her hand; sitting up in bed and talking familiarly of death, as it had been an ordinary affair, and up to the last

hour she spoke, and knew everyone as if she had been in health. I would fain," ends the Duke with unmistakable sincerity, "that these past memories should not be revived by any words of consolation sent me, for they are too many and too fresh, and since God hath consoled me, men can do nought, but rather, thinking to do the one thing, they do the contrary."

Eleonora de Toledo was truly mourned, if by few others, by her husband, to whom she had been a constant support and consolation. Faults of temper and of arrogance she had; her ladies and her servants found her no easy mistress, and she had a passion for gambling which perhaps increased when failing health made outdoor amusements less practicable. But, though the courtiers suffered from her capricious humour, they knew that she alone would intercede for them with Cosimo and soften his rigour, if they by ill luck fell into disgrace. The poor, too, had reason to bless her name for her great charity. Thus, remembering moreover how rare were the instances of wifely devotion in her time and in her country, the traveller in Florence, when he visits the Spanish Chapel of S. Maria Novella, may spare a thought for Eleonora de Toledo from whom it has its name.

It was but sadly that Cosimo began the year 1563; four of his children dead, and those his most promising and most dear, none of them having lived as much as a score of years, while their mother had not been spared any of the grief caused by such premature losses. Although she would in any case have probably soon died, there can be no doubt that sorrow hastened her end, devoted as she was in especial to Garzia. Francesco was still distant from home, and Ferdinando not yet recovered. For him, however, Cosimo had already begun to plan, designing that he should succeed Giovanni as Cardinal, and this alone he declared would in some degree console him. Vasari, writing again to Vincenzo



ELEONORA DA TOLEDO

From a picture in the Wallace Collection



Borghini, the Spedalingo of the Foundling Hospital, gives us a glimpse of him returning to every-day life:

I left the Duke well and in good humour, and Don Arnando free of fever, and for all that the red hat is come, he still knows not that he is Cardinal, nor yet that the Duchess and the others are dead. I left the Duke, indeed, much consoled<sup>1</sup>. (Florence, Jan. 19th, 1563.)

Luckily Ferdinando, not yet fifteen, grew up, if not with a vocation for the ecclesiastical life, at least with no distaste for it, and became on the whole an ornament of the Sacred College. He never entered the priesthood, but usefully served his family as the representative of granducal interests in Rome.

As for Francesco, he felt real grief for his brothers, and for Giovanni in particular. The Bishop Minerbettì wrote from Spain that the news which was so unexpected had been a shock to all, but “above all, to the Principe mio Signore, who, as he tenderly loved his brother, so he hath wept bitterly for him, and whenever he remembers him, again weeps.” And though he kept from tears in the day, yet at night it was clear he gave way to them and hardly slept, “as may be seen by the weariness of his face and of his eyes<sup>2</sup>.” Cosimo, bereaved and lonely as he was, hastened the return of his son from Spain, and Francesco would be glad to obey the summons, though it was to a changed scene he must return.

There should be no need to end this chapter with a note that jars on its sad close. Yet calumny, I repeat, is not so dead but that it is well to insist how strongly Signor Saltini has confuted the version current as to the deaths of Giovanni and Garzìa. The wild story that Garzìa when out hunting, roused by some unknown motive, killed Giovanni and was afterwards mortally stabbed by his father on confessing his crime has been traced to Rome, where Florentine exiles congregated,

<sup>1</sup> Gaye, *op. cit.* vol. III p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> Saltini, *Tragedie Medicee domestiche*, p. 351.

while it spread like wild-fire among the many *fuorusciti* in Venice. Such an opportunity of embellishing and improving on the fact of the boy's death was not likely to be lost by those idle evil-speakers, and once again it was a case of assuming Cosimo to be a monster, given which premiss an inhuman action was a natural conclusion. Later versions of the legend added such details as the bleeding of Giovanni's corpse when Garzia came near it, which give a tinge of mediaevalism to the tale and might warn us against believing it. Even granting that Cosimo might have concealed his own share in the matter, it is hard to understand why he should not have told Francesco of Garzia's passionate act, for it is only nowadays that princely archives can be examined. But in fact, Cosimo's murdering Garzia was not a part of the original tale; this inculpated Garzia alone, who himself, the tale ran, afterwards died of a wound received out hunting.

We may, however, safely follow the more reputable historians and reject the glaring colours and extravagant actions of melodrama for the sober tints and the minor tones of every-day life. Even in the Cinquecento, even at the court of a Medici prince, this was more simple and less chequered with passion than we are ready to believe.

## CHAPTER VII

### COSIMO'S RELATIONS WITH THE VATICAN—CARNESECCHI

BEFORE taking up the tale of Cosimo's later years, it may be well to pause and consider briefly his attitude on ecclesiastical matters and his dealings with the different Popes of his day. This will serve to show how a great though indefinable change had come over the Italy of his youth and prepare us for the action he took in the case of Pietro Carnesecchi, who was burnt for heresy in Rome in 1567, under the implacable ex-inquisitor, Pope Pius V.

The mere names of the Popes with whom Cosimo successively had dealings mark the changes which in his lifetime came over the papacy<sup>1</sup>. First of the list was Clement VII, irresolute and shifty, whom Cosimo may have regarded with awe during his early days in Rome, but whom he doubtless criticised with the sharpness of a precocious Florentine youth during the months when he waited on his pleasure at Bologna. Next came Paul III, debonair if it suited him, longing to revive the golden days of Leo X and succeeding but indifferently in years darkened by the increasing spread of heresy and the consequent emptiness of the papal treasury: a man who, when irritated, was a violent and unscrupulous enemy, against whom the Duke of Florence had need to use all his wits and practise not a little of that dissimulation in which he found Paul III and Clement VII adepts. And, in parenthesis, let it

<sup>1</sup> For the sake of greater clearness, a list of the Popes with whom Cosimo was concerned here follows: Clement VII (Medici), 1523–1534; Paul III (Farnese), 1534–1550; Julius III (del Monte), 1550–1555; Marcellus (Cervini), 1555; Paul IV (Caraffa), 1555–1559, Pius IV (Medici), 1559–1565; Pius V (Ghislieri), 1565–1572; Gregory XIII (Buoncompagni), 1572–1585.

once more be observed that dissimulation, masquerading under the name of prudence, was to the Italian of the Cinquecento rather a virtue than a vice and that, if Cosimo played the game of evasion better than did some of his contemporaries, this was from no lack of will on their part to oppose him with his own weapons. To Paul III succeeded the idle and pleasure-loving Julius III, and it is obvious enough that so far Cosimo had seen none but worldly Popes and had reason to feel even less respect for the spiritual than for the temporal rulers with whom he had come in contact. Whatever his faults, Charles V had in him more elements of greatness than any Pope of the day. With the election of Paul IV, Italy began to feel the violence of the Counter-Reformation, but in that land fanaticism is never welcome. Paul's fiery zeal for religion as he understood it was no more acceptable to his subjects than was his hatred for Spain, which, more than once, brought him into an undignified position. If Cosimo felt for him personally some glimmerings of respect, his opinion of him as a statesman was likely to be low. With Pius IV (in whose election Cosimo was more than a little instrumental) a wiser and more temperate policy prevailed. The Duke, who had some voice therein, had no reason to be ashamed of the results of his influence, while to his biographer it is a matter of great interest to observe the increasing weight his opinion carried with it at the papal court. Well would it have been for Italy if the successor of Pius IV had also been guided by Cosimo's prudent and conciliatory maxims, but, though Pius V thought highly of the Duke of Florence and willingly consulted him, he was too single-mindedly zealous for the spiritual welfare of Christendom to pay much attention to the delicate methods of diplomacy in which Cosimo was skilled. In him the Duke for the first time saw a Pope careless of temporal considerations and intent, by whatever mistaken means, on purifying

the Church. Unhappily, in Italy the evil was too deep-seated, and Pius achieved little more than the burning of a few heretics and the crushing of open expression of dissent. That dissimulation which was so widely prevalent extended not a little to religious matters. The men who, in the days of Paul III, had been openly indifferent and sceptical, now indeed conformed, and were scrupulous in attendance at mass or in any mechanical observance, but at heart merely added to their former scepticism the more insidious evil of hypocrisy. It is a sad reflection that Pius V, with all his earnestness and fervour, did more to check all possibility of true reform within the Church than the worldly Popes who went before him. For the temperate Pius IV, less ardent and less sincere, but far more keen-eyed and alive to the needs of the times, by allowing some scope to a more liberal theology, had kept alive a certain flame of reforming zeal.

We may, then, expect to find in Cosimo very little respect for the Popes personally, though a keen sense of the importance of their office; to see him a firm supporter of their official dignity and pomp and an equally decided opponent of any personal aggrandisement on their part. He welcomed the Council of Trent and did his best to urge its resumption and continuance, seeing in it a most efficient check to exorbitant claims on the part of the papacy. In the same way, his love of order and his keen sense of the need for keeping up papal prestige led him to enforce observance of ecclesiastical decrees in his own states, and to intervene when Alva seemed likely to humiliate Paul IV too far. Even during the miseries and turbulence of the Sienese war, the Duke put a stop to the plundering of churches, writing to Concini:

We have heard with grief of the robberies practised by the army of the Marchese di Marignano at Casole, in which not even the house of God was spared. We will not have these iniquities. If the army

is allowed to plunder, the churches are to be respected...and we desire that the Marchese should obey these orders. And you, if you care to be in our favour, will do your utmost to hinder such errors<sup>1</sup>.

And finally, as a prince and an absolute prince, Cosimo could have not a grain of sympathy with heretics whom he looked on as rebels to their lawful master. The increasing orderliness apparent in the Roman Church during the years of the Counter-Reformation would be acceptable to Cosimo, whose love for organisation was almost a passion, and he himself, whether from the influence of his wife or from other motives unknown to us, lived, according to the precepts of his time, a singularly exemplary life of religious observance. He had, it would appear, an unusually keen sense of what was fitting, and the scoffing at religion which was so much in vogue in his youth seems to have appealed little to him. The letters quoted in the foregoing chapter seem to show that he was, in his best moments, capable of feeling more than conventional religious emotion; nor must it be forgotten that to an Italian (and an Italian of the formal Cinquecento) the mere outward fact of conforming had far more importance than to us.

But, in the days of Paul III, affronts and difficulties in plenty embittered relations between Tuscany and Rome, and there was more than an echo of the old Florentine spirit in Cosimo's dealings with this Pope who had ever an eye to some fair corner of Tuscany for his sons and grandsons. Paul III's support of the Dominican friars, who were more than suspected of dealings with the Florentine exiles, was perhaps not solely due to a sense of his ecclesiastical prerogatives. Into the details of these disputes we need not go, but in Cosimo's letters during Paul III's pontificate there is an acid flavour. A man like the Duke, who acted

<sup>1</sup> Cantù, *Gli Eretici d' Italia*, vol. II. p. 418 (Torino, 1866).

after deliberation indeed, but with vigour and force, had little patience for the perpetual practice in Rome of giving fair words and no more. He himself trusted little to words:

.... As for their showing themselves my friends, in so far as 'tis to their profit, by now we know one another;...as for their demonstrating that they think Vostra Signoria will do them good offices and such like—with this sort of folk 'tis wiser to take nothing for granted (non dir quattro, se l' uomo non l' ha legato nel Sacco) for, as for words, the wind blows them away.

Again he says:

.... Let me tell Vostra Signoria of a proverb we have, which says the ant in the hollow tree will not come out for all you knock on the trunk; and I say the Pope likewise will not yield for all the words in the world, but will let the proceedings drag on, ever seeking to avoid a breach with the Emperor, and none the less, trying to escape being taken in the net of the Council<sup>1</sup>.

It is hard, when every face is masked, to know what words are true, and yet hardest of all is it to believe that Paul III ever earnestly wished the Council to be held or did anything but hinder its convocation by all means in his power. His apologists have an almost impossible task in explaining away the fact of his unacknowledged opposition, or in denying his ultimate responsibility for the solemn trifling which (when once the Council had begun) his legates allowed to prevail at its sessions. There was little zeal among leaders who could let day after day pass by in discussions over what seal should be used for letters, and whether the holy Synod should first read a letter to the King of France or one to the King of the Romans<sup>2</sup>. When there followed the translation of the Council to Bologna and the Pope professed himself powerless to insist on its return to Trent, who can deny that there was justifica-

<sup>1</sup> L. Carcereri, *Il Concilio di Trento... marzo, settembre, 1547* (Bologna, 1910), pp. 558, 115. Letters to Don Diego de Mendoza.

<sup>2</sup> Sarpi, *Storia del Concilio Tridentino*, vol. I p. 331.

tion for the following outburst from Charles, whether or no he felt all the anger he expressed? As the nuncio was reading Paul's excuses to him, the Emperor interrupted him:

"These are nought but words," he cried, "and so it ever is and they amount to nothing, save that the Pope cannot make the Bishops return, nor can I understand his Holiness, for now he says he is above the Council, and now (as at this time) that the Council is above him.... Be off, be off, for I will no longer believe any words, whether from you or from the Pope." "All the world knows the pains he takes to magnify his own house and heap up riches," ended Charles, "and how for these aims he neglects all that pertains to his office... I know nought of him save that he is an obstinate old man<sup>1</sup>."

As for the Duke of Florence, he too was outspoken on the subject of the Pope's failings, and ever urged the importance of a Council. He looked on this, he wrote:

"as a means to take from the reputation of the Pope and bring about a reform, so that the priests lay aside the tyranny they have practised and do practise, and return to what is lawful... without their losing one jot of what is their due, but so as they be not suffered to usurp what is mere tyranny. By this means," Cosimo urged on Granvelle, the Emperor "would do great pleasure to the King of England (as he greatly desireth); by this means heresy were quenched in Germany, and Christendom purged of heretics, and of the strange and evil conduct of the priests; the Pope alone would make an outcry thereat."

He analyses the impotence of the Pope to resist, adding that:

proceeding by way of a Council, there will be none that doth not laud him (Charles) to the skies; and if the Pope acts foolishly, let his Majesty chastise him, which is full easy... an if it were said to me: His Majesty will leave the Pope as he is, and seek to do away with heresy—besides that I hold this to be most difficult, it leaves moreover the tyranny of the priests and leaves their grandeur to the Popes, and this absolute power which will ever be his bane throughout his life and after his death be a stone of stumbling to his descendants.

<sup>1</sup> Carcereri, *op. cit.* p. 126.

Cosimo, in short, had his ideal of what a Council could do, which was not entirely borne out by facts, since the power of the Vatican to temporise and nullify was, by its sheer passivity, far too strong for Charles (hampered by so many warring interests) to galvanise into energetic and powerful action. However, in 1547, the Pope was to an Italian still mainly a temporal ruler, to be checkmated by other sovereigns, and Cosimo ended his letter with the vigorous recommendation:

An if the Pope should profess himself desperate (though this I doubt) let his Majesty correct him in such sort that, in his time and in that of his sons, the Popes torment not the world daily; let him bring back the heretics to obedience and the priests to the canon law, for else his Majesty will never do aught that he designs<sup>1</sup>.

The eventual results of the Council of Trent, which tended to intensify while they limited papal authority, were, however, not so unacceptable to Cosimo as might be anticipated from this letter. The Reformation, not the Council, had by its very existence put a check to papal aggrandisement far more effectual than could have been devised by any council, and in this way, it may be said, the Synod of Trent had done the work desired by Italian princes. For, by alienating and separating once for all Catholics from Protestants, it took away all hope of a united Christendom and a universally respected Pope. Yet it was rather the force of the Reformation than of the Council of Trent which so altered the trend of the papal policy and the spirit of the Vatican that Paul III, had he come to life only twenty years after his death, would scarcely have recognised his own court. The palace which in his day had been the centre of brilliance and splendour was now the scene of simplicity and severity, where the Pope spent his days between prayers and matters of

<sup>1</sup> Canestrini et Desjardins, *Négociations diplomatiques, etc.*, vol. III. p. 173 Cosimo to Cardinal Granvelle, Feb. 6th, 1547.

ecclesiastical interest alone. For, to all earnest and religious men, the grave scandals of the Church of Rome were a grievous burden on their spirits, and Contarini, Pole, Morone, Caraffa and many another seized the opportunity of the growth of heresy to insist, as at no other time they could have insisted with impunity, on the need for a reform within the Church.

To this aspect of the matter we will return shortly, first observing that Cosimo had learnt by experience the grave importance of having a friendly neighbour on his southern borders. During all the years of Paul III's pontificate he had been harassed and vexed in one way or another and he was resolved in future to avoid such annoyances. His increasing power gives an interest to the brief notes sent to his ambassadors in Rome when a conclave was imminent. Serristori seconded his master ably, and in Julius III, who counted himself almost the vassal of the Duke of Florence, Cosimo found a welcome successor to the Farnese Pope. And, although he turned out more of a nonentity than was expected, the difficulties of dealing with him, feelingly described by Serristori, affected Cosimo but little, since his will was sure in the end to prevail.

"I am in doubt over everything," laments the ambassador, "nor can one come to a conclusion nor hold aught secure, unless one sees him day by day; and to speak freely to your Excellency, I lose my bearings and know not how to find means to deal with these folk . . . , since their procedure hath no reason, no rule nor order whatsoever. The things that are of import they esteem lightly, and make a great to do over those that have no weight<sup>1</sup>."

The tale was always the same; let some little matter of personal dignity or vanity be touched, and the Pope's vigour and resentment were surprising; was it a question

<sup>1</sup> *Legazioni di Averardo Serristori*, p. 285.

of heresy or of the pressing danger from Turkish raids, the ambassadors were put off with promises or petulantly dismissed. Charles V's dry rejoinder to the papal nuncio was not too severe. Paul III, said the legate, would co-operate in the Turkish war and would give even the rochets of the bishops for the service of Christianity. "I well believe," retorted the Emperor, "that he would give the torn and worn-out rochets—but keep the money<sup>1</sup>."

To Julius succeeded the one Pope who was not markedly favourable to Cosimo, Paul IV, and even he softened towards him before his death and listened to his counsels of moderation. In the election of his successor Cosimo was most keenly interested, for he needed a support to counterpoise the growing influence of Philip of Spain. A short note to Lottini, once his secretary and now in the service of the Cardinal Chamberlain, showed his feelings:

Lottino, few words suffice a man of understanding (al buono intenditore poche parole). We desire to have no one on our part in the conclave save you... Santa Croce<sup>2</sup> was made Pope by the Chamberlain, being the chiefest enemy that Charles V had; a matter of scandal, ruin, and the worst of examples.... In trying to make Puteo<sup>3</sup> Pope, you instead made Pope, Paul IV, through whom the world, the Apostolic See, Italy, the Cardinal, and you in particular had your breast rent and your garments. If for the third time with your caprices over yonder you bring about the election of another such, all the water in Arno will not wash you. I send you a finely planned game to play if you have the wit to play it; if not I protest, of the past in especial all the blame is yours, for that you so persuaded the Cardinal<sup>4</sup>.

Lottini, fortunately for him, satisfied the Duke and some years afterwards the fame of Cosimo's power to influence the conclaves was current in France. On the

<sup>1</sup> *Legazioni*, etc. p. 100, and Carcereri, *op. cit.* p. 127.

<sup>2</sup> Cardinal Cervini, titular of the church of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, afterwards Pope Marcellus

<sup>3</sup> Jacopo Puteo of Nice, reckoned to be a very probable Pope.

<sup>4</sup> Galluzzi, *op. cit.* vol. II. p. 264.

election of Gregory XIII the Tuscan envoy wrote thus to Francesco, then acting as Regent:

Now, on this new creation of a Pope, what does your Highness think was said (*scilicet*, by the enemies of Cosimo and of Catherine de Médicis, whose ingenuity went so far as to accuse the Duke of heresy). The first thing they asked was "how did this new Pope please the King and Queen? and if the Duke of Florence had used his alchemy to bring about the election?" They asked no more of him, but merely said: "For all he is Bolognese, he will straightway turn Florentine." And by Heaven they were stupefied when they heard he had been created in eighteen hours...<sup>1</sup>.

This fact, however, perhaps merely showed how successful had been Cosimo's previous organisation. Writing to his master from Rome, Concini had said:

I should judge...it were well that the Cardinal de' Medici went secretly to Boncompagno (afterwards Gregory XIII) and with few and pregnant words said to him: "Monsignore, the Grand Duke my father desires at all costs to make you Pope. By the Grace of God, he has the means easily to succeed therein. Do you, for your part, also help yourself and hold this that I say for certain, since henceforward I will speak only by actions, lest we be hindered and interrupted by ill wishers." This I say because Boncompagno is not ceremonious but ..secret, and will prize more highly these few words and this manner of acting than he would ostentation and much talk...<sup>2</sup>.

The words of Ferdinando seem to have fallen on ears that for once were not deaf though belonging to a future Pope. But even before the year 1572, Cosimo's voice and opinion had weight with the Sacred College. When his supporter Pius IV was seriously ill, Cardinal Borromeo the papal nephew, recalled in haste to Rome, sent a special courier to the Duke of Florence, begging him to meet him outside Porta S. Gallo. Thus, the Duke accompanying him a short while on his road so as to lose no time, they could talk together and come to an agreement over the future conclave<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Canestrini et Desjardins, *Négociations diplomatiques, etc.*, vol. III. p. 781.

<sup>2</sup> Venocchio Maffei, *Dal Titolo di Duca di Firenze e Siena al titolo di Granduca di Toscana* (Firenze, 1905), p. 140.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, p. 52.

But we must now turn to the particular case of Carnesecchi, and touch on the influence of the Counter-Reformation.

A sad page of history is that on which is written the failure of religious reform in Italy, and the blighting of those hopes which were justly roused when such men as Cardinal Contarini, Cardinal Morone, Cardinal Pole, and Giberti, Bishop of Verona, devoted themselves so warmly to the task of restoring the discipline and attempting to purify the perverted morality of their Church and of their country. But it was perhaps Utopian to hope that such seed as that sown in the Renaissance could now bear good fruit. To churchmen, steeped in classical and pagan literature, accustomed to a remarkable freedom of thought, it seemed like a lapse into barbarism now they were expected to turn their attention to the logic of the schoolmen and the dry theology needed to combat the German reformers. Nor did apostolic simplicity appeal with much force to men who had grown up in the liberal traditions of the Renaissance; who were, many of them, connoisseurs in art, collectors of precious gems, of manuscripts or even of printed books. In Italy, except for the Umbrian towns, and in the heat of those religious revivals which now and then had passed like a flame through the land, there was comparatively little religious fervour; no such material as that which was ready, in Germany or in the Low Countries, to seize on the words of reformers and hold to the new doctrines steadfastly in the face of war and persecution. The reforming movement was rather among the thoughtful and cultivated, as the names already instanced indicate; and where, as for example at Siena, great enthusiasm was roused by the preaching of Fra Bernardino Ochino, it was more of the nature of a passing revival than a real change of opinion. Ochino was later

numbered among the heretics, but there was little response to such questioning of authority in his native land. This lack of ground in which to sow the seed; the gulf between the better classes and the peasantry sunk in misery and ignorance; the sceptical indifference and shrewd business habits of the *bourgeoisie*, which made them the most unpromising subjects for religious propaganda, are perhaps some of the elements which prevented any real spread of reformed doctrine throughout Italy, and explain the comparative ease with which heresy was crushed. And further, as no religious upheaval is free from secular motives, it may be added that one great cause for a rising against the clergy was lacking in Italy, where there were few very rich benefices; nothing at least to compare with the princely possessions of German bishops and archbishops. Here they had a closer connection with the communal life of the towns and were less exempt from taxation; there was therefore no longing to seize their lands<sup>1</sup>. The prestige, also, attaching to the papacy gave all Italians a certain personal interest in associating themselves with the Church, and this interest, if dormant at other times, waked to life in some degree, when other lands set the example of schism. And again, the easy Italian temperament, strongly inclined to indifference and scepticism, made the majority more ready to shrug their shoulders and even jest at the corruption of their spiritual guides than to feel the indignation and scorn which such conduct roused in minds truly religious. Thus they were also—for their philosophy had its own good points—opposed to persecution, and the reign of violence was shorter here than elsewhere, though it did its work only too effectually in the brief pontificates of Paul IV and Pius V.

For the brief season passed only too soon during which Vittoria Colonna held earnest talk with Cardinal

<sup>1</sup> Cosci, *Preponderanze Straniere*, p. 132.

Reginald Pole and his circle, in which was numbered the apostolic protonotary Pietro Carnesecchi; only too soon the books and influence of Juan Valdés at Naples were judged pernicious. The papal court was now seriously alarmed by the extraordinary spread of heresy in the North, and by its grave menace to the power of the Curia. The one thing to be upheld seemed the authority of the Church, and to this end the Council of Trent must be muzzled and those who were suspected of any leaning to reform be tracked down by the inquisitors. It is easy to see how different motives combined for the downfall of those who might have kept alive religion in Italy; the worldly-minded dreaded the loss of fat benefices, and an examination of the hundred and one abuses with which ecclesiastical reform must needs have dealt; the single-minded saw with horror the prospect that certain privileges of the Church would be cut off, and, confounding religion with tradition, united with their worst enemies to suppress those who were in truth their friends. Thus the current of reform within the Church was more or less consciously deflected, and sins against morality were condoned and minimised, while the least error in dogma or carelessness of ceremonial observance was pounced on by the inquisitors, who now first became a dreaded power in Italy with the results we know too well:

"Besides the despite done to Christian charity," writes an Italian author (speaking of the fierce reaction in Italy), "it caused the squandering of a wealth of faith; a loss which has never been made good among us. For, with the great majority, that happened which is now seen, and either doubt and indifference (often spiced with hypocrisy) were wide-spread among them, or there was a superfluity of Madonnas and Saints... a cult, in short, was left us, not religion<sup>1</sup>."

And year by year the detestation of heretics increased, a fact which must be constantly borne in mind when we

<sup>1</sup> Bruto Amante, *Giulio Gonzaga e il Movimento religioso femminile nel secolo XVI* (Bologna, 1905), p. 405. He quotes a philosopher as saying: "Noi ci serviamo di Dio, e non serviamo Dio."

come to consider Cosimo's dealings with Pietro Carnesecchi. It is vain to expect any word of sympathy with them in the men of that generation, and Ignatius Loyola, who breathes the very spirit of the Counter-Reformation, did but give expression to the more extreme view in looking on them "not as men but as wolves<sup>1</sup>." Every reference made to them in the letters of Italian envoys in France shows that they were indeed treated as outside the pale: "rotten Lutherans," "those of the infected sect," are the usual descriptions of them, and never a word of compassion is heard if unsuspecting Huguenots were by chance caught in a trap; the Saint Bartholomew itself excited only a faint expression of horror.

With this reflection in our minds, and not forgetful of Cosimo's peculiar hatred of insubordination, Carnesecchi's story may briefly be told.

The Protonotary, who belonged to Vittoria Colonna's band of friends and was a disciple of Juan Valdés, was an old adherent of the Medici and well known to Cosimo, to whose cause he had kept true in spite of the enticing words of the Florentine exiles. This, rather than his devotion to Clement VII (which might, if anything, tend to prejudice Cosimo against him), seems to have been his real claim on the Duke's gratitude and protection. What then are the facts? When the days of reaction were beginning, Carnesecchi, in 1546, was cited to Rome to be tried for opinions which, as is obvious, must have been highly distasteful to Cosimo. But, thanks in especial to the Duke's support and that of Queen Catherine, he was acquitted<sup>2</sup>.

"How dear to us is the Prothonotary (*sic*) Carnesecchi," Cosimo wrote to his agent, Babbi, in Rome, "you can imagine, seeing he is a protégé of our house and so

<sup>1</sup> T. Lindsay, *History of the Reformation*, vol. II. p. 554.

<sup>2</sup> Leonardo Bruni, *Cosimo I e il processo d' Eresia del Carnesecchi* (Torino, 1891), p. 10. The Queen is of course Catherine de Médicis.

greatly our servant. Do not, then, fail to grant him in our name all that he has need of<sup>1</sup>." And, when Carnesecchi after this first trial went to France, he brought with him recommendations from the Duke. But in the more dangerous days of Paul IV, Carnesecchi, in 1556, was again accused of heresy, chiefly owing, it would seem, to the bad offices of a friar with whom he disputed some point of theology only to be told he was a heretic. "And you," retorted Carnesecchi (with as little prudence as politeness), "are the most egregious blockhead that ever walked on two legs!" And so went his way leaving the friar to vow a revenge which it was only too easy for him to carry out<sup>2</sup>. Again, when there followed the inevitable citation to Rome, Cosimo was urgent that he should be released, being now as ever (a thing not to be lost sight of) convinced of the Protonotary's innocence. Cosimo was in fact less blindly devoted to the Church and to the Pope than is sometimes supposed, and fully aware that, as he himself said, "nowadays, owing to the great suspicion of heresy which is abroad, whoso lives more retired than another or than is usual, is reckoned a Lutheran<sup>3</sup>."

At first all went well and Carnesecchi who was at Venice and too ill to travel was, at the instance of the Florentine ambassador, granted a respite of two months. This, it was confidently believed, would be renewed. But when the memorial in his favour was on the point of being read to the Cardinals assembled in congregation, the Pope suddenly rose and in a curt and resolute tone said that Carnesecchi must be proceeded against rigorously and without delay. The Cardinals at his voice "turned cold and dared not utter a single word<sup>4</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> Bruni, *loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> A. Agostini, *Pietro Carnesecchi e il Movimento Valdesiano* (Firenze, 1899), p. 236.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, p. 173.

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*, p. 241.

But nothing further (beyond depriving him of his benefices) was done before the death of Paul IV, in 1559, brought a welcome sense of relief to many in Italy and among them Carnesecchi. Up to the present, Cosimo had not been inactive in the cause of the Protonotary. A letter quoted in the trial of Carnesecchi of this same year, 1559, said:

As for Carnesecchi, I make no doubt but that all will pass as is desired, both because of his innocence, and because of the authority of those who intercede for him, who will be many. But the chief of them is the Duke of Florence... who hath already given an earnest of what he promises.

A little later, when the milder days of Pius IV had begun, and Carnesecchi might hope even more from Cosimo's intervention, he wrote confidently to Donna Giulia Gonzaga (though he was still under suspicion of heresy):

I have no fear that wrong will be done me, and if the Duke of Florence had not fallen sick, I should by now have overcome all difficulties. For, though he is slow in things that concern others (fiery as he is in what concerns himself) yet his authority is so great that it outweighs his tardiness. The Duchess of Florence hath given me word she desired to help me, but up to the present she hath done nought, being all intent on the care of the Duke of Florence; but I, for all that, hope that innocence and justice will prevail over malignity and hatred<sup>1</sup>.

Shortly after, on the same occasion, comes an entry to the effect that the Pope said he would attend to Carnesecchi's affairs:

...which however did not suffice the said Carnesecchi, who desired the matter should be speedily despatched. Nor could he have hoped for this (having regard to his Holiness' many preoccupations), were it not that the said Pope, at the instance of the Duke of Florence, had been content to commit the examination of his case to two Cardinals who were not suspect.

<sup>1</sup> *Estratto dal Processo di Pietro Carnesecchi*, edito da G. Manzoni (Miscellanea di Storia italiana), vol. x. 1870, pp. 375, 642.

Carnesecchi, then, up to this year of 1560 had had material help from Cosimo towards gaining a prompt and fair enquiry into his questionable opinions. But if he now began to think himself secure, he rejoiced too soon, for Pius V, succeeding in 1565, had no mind to forget those whom, as Fra Michele the Dominican Inquisitor, he had suspected of heresy. One of these was Carnesecchi, and in 1566 he was for the third time summoned to Rome to stand his trial.

He was then at Florence, and a letter from the Pope to Cosimo informed him that the Maestro of the Apostolic palace was being sent thither on a matter that concerned religion, this referring in fact to the handing over of Carnesecchi to the Holy Office in Rome. The order for the Protonotary's arrest was obeyed so promptly, that Carnesecchi was dining with the Duke when he was seized, and Cosimo's comment on his own action was: "I served as constable (*servii da bargello*)."<sup>1</sup> It was an ungenerous act, very little better, as one at first thinks, than a betrayal. Yet the sequel may serve to show that Cosimo need not be accused of consciously sending Carnesecchi to his death, and the point is important, for it is but another instance of the prejudice which has misrepresented so many of his deeds. Cosimo, there is no doubt, was peculiarly anxious at this time to please the Pope, whose aid was essential to him if he wished to secure the title of Grand Duke. Unpopular as were the extreme measures of Paul IV or Pius V, in Cosimo's opinion they had unquestionably a certain right of jurisdiction over ecclesiastics and thus it was mere courtesy between princes to hand over to the Pope one under his authority. But, having done so, he by no means left Carnesecchi to his fate. When things began to look ominous and no hint of release was heard, the Duke, instead of drawing back, or even showing the prudence recommended by his ambassadors, if anything redoubled

his efforts on behalf of Carnesecchi. Since, then, the Granducal title was still hanging in the balance, this continued active intervention to some extent condones the Duke's initial complaisance. He wrote himself to Pius, saying that:

up to the present he had been silent, so as not to hinder the course of justice, but that he now implored his indulgence for Carnesecchi, begging the Pope not to suffer him to waste his life in prison, and all the more as his error was, he verily believed, rather due to lightness and vanity than to heresy<sup>1</sup>.

To his ambassador Cosimo showed plainly that he had looked on the handing over of Carnesecchi to Pius and his subsequent release at the instance of the Duke as more or less a formality. That such a request on his part could be refused had not occurred to him. "For," said the Duke, "after nine months of prison (during which the affairs of a kingdom might have been settled) it seems an iniquitous thing that a prince should refuse to commend his vassal to mercy<sup>2</sup>."

Again the Duke wrote, this time to the Cardinal di Correggio. He had no love, he said, for heresy, and would gladly see it rooted out:

But I am persuaded that there is a vast difference between one disease and another, and between evil opinions and vanity and frivolity; wherefore, if I molest you once more, let it be my excuse that I know the nature of Carnesecchi, and it is my belief that he hath erred rather in being wise in his own conceit than in aught else<sup>3</sup>.

Cosimo did not yet give up Carnesecchi as lost. Undeterred by his lack of success he once more addressed Pius himself:

"Your Holiness' most humane letter," he wrote, "gives me courage to entreat you once more that you deign to look with your wonted compassion, not so much on the demerits of Carnesecchi, as on the shame that would ever rest on this noble family.... God desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted

<sup>1</sup> L. Bruni, *op. cit.* p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, p. 29.

and live.... The greater his error, the greater will appear the grace of your Holiness, and the more so, as chastisement indeed restraineth men by reason of the fear that fills them, but the love which is the fruit of kindness and pardon maketh them act joyously.... And assuredly I shall esteem it (the pardon of Carnesecchi) one of the most signal favours I could at this present receive from your Holiness<sup>1.</sup>"

Two months later indeed, Cosimo wrote to Serristori in Rome: "We have no mind to aid an obstinate heretic." Yet, when the sentence was passed that branded Carnesecchi as such, Serristori threw himself at the Pope's feet to implore his life. On this, Pius showed himself disposed to grant the boon, for the love he bore the house of Medici, provided the Protonotary confessed himself penitent. He at least postponed his execution for ten days. But the Protonotary stood firm, racked though he was by a prolonged and mercilessly minute examination which had, as he piteously said, altogether stupefied him. Nothing would induce him to recant his views on justification by faith which were unacceptable to the inquisitors. He believed them and was true to them till death. Here again, unless I mistake, Cosimo was surprised and perhaps baffled. This proved once more that the worldly maxims which he had learnt in his youth and by which his conduct was mainly guided, gave him no clue whatever to the promptings of earnest religion, whether professed by a Pope or a heretic.

Carnesecchi was thus finally left to his fate, though out of respect to the Medici and to his own family, he was not burnt alive but was first beheaded (October, 1567). All that the Duke could still do was to save his property from confiscation and this at least he accomplished.

Such is the story, and, if I understand it rightly, I am disinclined to agree with Colonel Young, who indeed expresses a belief current also among some

<sup>1</sup> L. Bruni, *op. cit.* p. 51.

Italian authors. Cosimo, he says, was bent on the Granducal crown which was only to be had from the Pope, and "knew well that Carnesecchi's life would be the price<sup>1</sup>." I would also add that Colonel Young assumes a closeness of connection and even friendship between Cosimo and Carnesecchi of which I find no confirmation from the Protonotary's own biographers. Nor does it seem probable that Carnesecchi had so much influence over the Duke as is here suggested. Cosimo's estimate of him as inclined to presumption and conceit is worth remembering in face of the statement that he was "one of Cosimo's most trusted friends and advisers<sup>2</sup>."

It seems clear that the Duke did hand over Carnesecchi in part at least to please Pius, and it would be foolish to deny that his wish for the Granducal title had weight with him, anxious as he was to secure the Pope's favour. But it appears very far from true that he believed he was so much as endangering Carnesecchi's life. It may strike us nowadays as being a singularly high-handed and egoistic action to condemn a man to so much as some months' imprisonment for one's own ends. But in the Italy of the sixteenth century a prince had remarkably little regard for the comfort of a subject, and titles at that time had an exaggerated value and importance. Carnesecchi, the Duke may have reflected, had twice escaped the Inquisition and twice mainly owing to his (Cosimo's) good offices. These had been effectual even when a Pope so hostile to him as Paul III was ruling, and it was even more likely that Carnesecchi would be promptly released if his freedom were entreated from a Pope so friendly as Pius. If he proved a heretic indeed, protégé of the Medici though he was, Cosimo would, he averred, have no interest in his fate; a heretic could not be too severely treated. But the Duke had a firm belief in his innocence, and no suspicion that,

<sup>1</sup> *The Medici*, vol. II. p. 295.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem.*

under the new régime at the Vatican, no desire to oblige a powerful and complaisant neighbour would weigh for a moment in the balance against the least evidence of a tendency to heresy. Had he realised this, we may almost give Cosimo the benefit of the doubt and judge that he would have connived at Carnesecchi's escape from Florence. The Duke had no love for the Inquisition, and this new severity of enquiry was distasteful to him. It is not out of place to observe, in this connection, that Paul IV had been obliged, by the Duke's strong desire, to abolish the Florentine branch of the Inquisition, replacing it by a single inquisitor always in residence. He disliked the intrusion of an institution foreign to his states and suspected, further, the possibility that political matters might be hidden under the disguise of religion. The inquisitors were exempt from secular jurisdiction and this to Cosimo, as to the Venetians, was inadmissible. Even the Nuncio might not interfere in matters of faith, and the only *autos-da-fé* seen in Florence were holocausts of heretical books, whose authors or owners abjured and were absolved<sup>1</sup>.

We need not debate the further and more complicated question of what would have been Cosimo's behaviour had he thought Carnesecchi guilty of heresy and so in real danger on his arrest. It is possible that what seemed to him the harmlessness of the Protonotary would have induced the Duke to attempt to save him, but he shared to the full the prevalent hatred of sectaries. Writing to his ambassador in Rome on the occasion of Carnesecchi's second trial he says: "If we had heard the least hint to his discredit...as to religion, not only would we not speak in his favour, but would be his persecutor<sup>2</sup>." This certainly is explicit, if he would have been so

<sup>1</sup> Martin Philippson, *La Contre-révolution religieuse au XVI Siècle*, p. 232 (Bruxelles, Paris, 1884).

<sup>2</sup> Agostini, *op. cit.* p. 241.

severe when it came to the point, but as has already appeared, he was better than his word and to the very end strove for Carnesecchi's pardon and release. His action in surrendering the Protonotary had been ungenerous and inconsiderate and his only defence is that he did his best to atone for it. Unluckily he calculated on the usual policy of Rome, but it was not with a politician he had to do. He had no clue to the probable conduct of a single-minded and fanatical inquisitor.

How the matter appeared to contemporaries we may judge from one or two quotations. Cosimo's secretary, Babbi, writing from Rome, thus refers to Carnesecchi. He must have been associated in past years with this man of singularly blameless life, but displays no trace of sympathy for him.

Carnesecchi...may now be canonised as a stinking heretic and an egregious fool, and let such be his end if he persists obstinately in bringing himself to an evil and shameful death<sup>1</sup>.

No less instructive as to the feeling prevalent towards heretics are the brief comments of the temperate and kindly Scipione Ammirato. Carnesecchi was, he says:

not ignorant of letters; of noble birth and, above all, amiable and courteous in manner...but, by giving himself up to following the perverse opinions of the heretics (which he would not retract even under the fear of death) he thus, by his miserable end, obscured all his other good qualities, and, not content with shamefully losing his life, cared nought that, besides losing his soul, he left a hateful and abominable remembrance of himself to posterity, to the injury of his family and his country<sup>2</sup>.

Even in Italy the lesson had been learnt that a heretic was an outlaw, that every man's hand was against him and that with him no faith need be kept. In days of religious or political transition it is only men both

<sup>1</sup> L. Bruni, *op. cit* p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> *Istorie Fiorentine*, parte iv. p. 542 (1641).

high-minded and steadfast who come scatheless through the trials peculiar to an age of changing morality, and Cosimo was not one of such. Yet it is doubtful whether his conscience ever so much as pricked him for his act of obedience to the Pope which may offend the modern reader. Here, as in the war with Siena, we censure what his contemporaries admired, for, after all, it is but disinterested and noble actions that stand the test of time.

## CHAPTER VIII

### LATER YEARS OF COSIMO—COSIMO AND CORSICA— THE GRANDUCAL TITLE

COSIMO's biographer would gladly end his tale before the last ten years of the Duke's life, although in the eyes of his subjects and rivals he visibly grew in splendour with the acquisition of the 1563–70 Granducal title, and perhaps had even greater cause for triumph in the increasing value and success of his fleet. It is significant that Francesco, when sent for from Spain on the death of his brothers (since Cosimo longed to collect his surviving children about him), found the Duke at Pisa, intent on the building of new galleys and the furtherance of his lately created order of S. Stefano<sup>1</sup>. Of this order, specially intended for war with the Turks, Duke Alessandro's natural son Giulio had been made first admiral. He showed no disposition for the Church, and these military knights were not, like Templars and Hospitallers, bound by any vow of celibacy.

A later chapter will tell of the good service done by these new opponents of pirates and Mohammedans; we must first revert to the years immediately following on Cosimo's losses, having anticipated the chronological order of events in order to finish the subject of Carnesecchi's trial and death.

The Duke was growing weary of the heavy burden of government, and the thought that his future labours would lack the supporting sympathy of Eleonora made them doubly distasteful. He was now (1563) in his

<sup>1</sup> So at least Galluzzi tells us, but Saltini says that on his return, Francesco "hastened to his father who was lying ill at the ducal villa of Poggio a Cajano" (*Arch. Stor. Ital.* vol. xi. 1883, *L'Educazione del Principe Francesco*, p. 84). Perhaps the visit to Pisa followed on Cosimo's recovery.

forty-fifth year and had lived his life to the full, finding rest from the affairs of state in sport which demanded even more energy. A serious illness in the autumn of this year finally decided him nominally to hand over the government to Francesco. He was in hopes that the conduct of the state might have a sobering effect on the Prince, but, while creating him Regent, the Duke was careful still to keep the chief share of authority in his own hands and merely relieved himself of much drudgery.

His action caused intense surprise, and, as every movement of the crafty Duke of Florence was thought to hide some unconfessed design, rumours were current that he might aim at becoming Pope—a sufficiently wild flight of imagination. Only when it was realised that he still was more than a figure-head did gossip subside, and his securing the Granducal crown must have satisfied those enemies who would have been disappointed had he ceased to be a by-word among them for ambition. Cosimo did now in fact give up the greater part of his revenue and cease to attend to the daily routine of business. But he reserved his right to direct and advise his son on all important matters, to appoint certain officers such as the Admiral of the Order of S. Stefano and the Governor of Siena, and to keep palaces and villas for his own use.

The act of abdication took place on the Duke's birthday, June 11th, 1564, and he then gladly went off to the country, leaving Bartolommeo Concini to guide Francesco's first steps and act as intermediary between Duke and Prince. Concini, dealing now with a very different master, had the dexterity to get a good deal of power into his own hands, since Francesco, after at first dutifully attending to business, before long gave himself up to his pleasure-loving disposition. Unlike his father, he had no affection for the Florentines and was impatient of listening to their grievances. Cosimo

was not a little annoyed to find that the Prince would not take the pains to read the letters sent him by his subjects. He was ready, however, to share in their amusements, and so gained a popularity among his courtiers, which was not shared by the citizens. Shortly after his assuming the regency, the important question of his marriage was finally settled. This had been the subject of much negotiation, the outcome of which was that Francesco was betrothed to Archduchess Johanna of Austria, while her sister Barbara was given in marriage to his widowed brother-in-law Alfonso d'Este, who had so early lost his first wife, Lucrezia de' Medici. By this means relations with the imperial court, which were not always of the best, would it was hoped be improved, though the sequel will show that there was not much more success than with Lucrezia's marriage into the house of Este. However all promised well until the double wedding was planned to take place at Trent. Then the old wearisome question of precedence between Medici and Este became so hot that an order of the Emperor, bidding each bride to be married in her husband's states, proved the only solution.

Before Johanna could reach Florence, the Pope had died and it was supposed that a stop would be put to festivities. However, by the simple expedient of waiting till the two Florentine Cardinals (Niccolini, and the young Ferdinando de' Medici) had set out for Rome, the proprieties were satisfied and an entry, sumptuous even in Florentine annals, fell to the lot of the Archduchess. Yet the central figures of the pageant must have left something to be desired. The Prince, reported the Venetian ambassador, Lorenzo Priuli, "is of low stature, thin, dark complexioned and of a melancholy disposition." Andrea Gussoni who succeeded Priuli adds the detail that "he shows little grace in his dress or in his bearing," and also mentions his melancholy

disposition<sup>1</sup>. His bride, though her high birth made her so acceptable, was also "low of stature and thin"; "pale-faced with no charm of appearance".<sup>2</sup> Nor would her qualities of a humane, Christian and devout princess do much toward commending her to the gloomy Francesco. It was in fact a rather disastrous *mariage de convenance*, which failed even in its most important end, the providing an heir to the Duchy. Johanna was indeed always a favourite with the Duke, who treated her with almost excessive respect, but Francesco soon justified the observation of Priuli that he was "much absorbed by the love of women and set little store by virtue." His notorious *liaison* with Bianca Cappello had indeed begun before his marriage, though up to that date he had, for obvious reasons, concealed it as far as possible. No sooner was his object of alliance with the house of Habsburg secured, than he threw aside decorum. Pietro Buonaventuri, the husband of Bianca, was given a post in the Prince's household, and with the husband came the wife. Johanna, brought up as strictly as Francesco's own sisters, could not endure such scandalous laxity, but fell into a state of melancholy, further increased by her dislike of Tuscany. This home-sickness, which added little to her popularity with the sensitive Florentines, was fostered by the presence of her own people at court. Her small share of beauty faded under this cruel trial. Though the birth of her one sickly boy in 1577 may have brought her some happiness, she did not live to enjoy it long, but died the following year, only escaping the grief of outliving the little Filippo who died when he was but four. Her father-in-law, who had always done his best to support and befriend Johanna, died before her, and was spared the sight of Bianca Cappello's marriage to his heir. Indeed, had

<sup>1</sup> Albèri, *op. cit.* vol. II. serie II pp. 78, 377.

<sup>2</sup> Galluzzi, *op. cit.* vol. IV. p. 73

Cosimo lived, it is hard to believe that Bianca would have achieved her end, for even in Cosimo's decline he kept up the dignity of his position. It is inconceivable that he would have agreed to Francesco's marriage with a woman of Bianca's antecedents, who had not even high rank to commend her; the disgraced daughter of a Venetian nobleman was no match for his son, who had married an Archduchess. As long as the affair was irregular, he treated it rather more lightly than was to the taste of Johanna, but Tuscan morality was different from Austrian and the situation was delicate. He took the line that his daughter-in-law would do well not to believe all the tales told her of Francesco:

"I know the Prince is fond of you," he wrote, "and you of him, but it behoves us to bear with one another in some things and suffer youth to have its fling, and to endure with patience that which time will remedy...do you but look at your other sisters, you will haply be more content than appears with the state wherein you are yourself....Do not let yourself give way to whims, but use prudence and gentleness, showing yourself in general more cheerful in the presence of the Prince; attend to the affairs of your household, leaving the cares of government to him, and assuredly you will lead a more tolerable life<sup>1</sup>."

It was all in vain, for the fair-haired Bianca, of whose physical charms Montaigne thought lightly, had cast the spell of her gaiety and wit over the melancholy Francesco, and his devotion to her ended only with his death. Johanna might rage, and for all her careful instruction as a Christian princess, imprecate vengeance on her rival, but there was none to hear. Her one possible supporter, the Grand Duke, only gave her worldly advice for her guidance and was chiefly bent on his own amusements, rejoicing in his new freedom from routine. His relations with Francesco were always friendly, and Cosimo had by no means lost weight in the political world owing to his retirement, but he could now, without tiresome interruptions, indulge in

<sup>1</sup> Galluzzi, *op. cit.* vol. III. p. 79.

hunting, in building, in commerce, and in his cherished occupation of strengthening the little fleet he had created. This, at least, was the side of his life known to the world. In private, Cosimo was changed and the loss of Eleonora's tender and faithful companionship had gone far to wreck his life. He was still, it must be remembered, a man full of vigour and with such examples before him in the other members of his family that we are less surprised at his lapses than at the fact there were no more of them. For, so far as is known and according to contemporary testimony, Cosimo appears to have been faithful to Eleonora during his five-and-twenty years of married life. I have already spoken of the little Bia who was born to him before his marriage, and must not omit the mention made by Professor Manfroni of two natural sons whose names, so far as I am aware, occur nowhere else, but have been found by him in the annals of the knights of S. Stefano at Pisa. These two youths, named Cosimo and Lorenzo, were among the first members of the new order, and it is therefore a fair assumption that their birth, like Bia's, may date from the years of Cosimo's hot-blooded youth; it is also hard to believe that a later *liaison* would not have been recorded by his watchful enemies<sup>1</sup>. Nor must we forget that it was a matter of deep satisfaction to his subjects that the Duke was so careful of the honour of women and that he above all (so they said) in his best days himself set the example. Remembering, then, that Eleonora in her later years was in most indifferent health ("the Duchess," observes Fedeli, "is always indisposed and every morning brings up her food") we may in the main give Cosimo some credit for his behaviour, and attribute to him some real affection and constancy. The last years of his life,

<sup>1</sup> Fedeli in 1561 reports. "nè si sa da dopo ch' egli è principe, che abbia mai conversato se non con la Signora Duchessa," Albèri, *op. cit.* vol. II. serie II. p. 351.

however, unhappily did much to destroy this good impression, though we need not implicitly believe that, as the Venetian ambassador would have it, Cosimo threw aside all decorum and restraint and was in danger of his life from incensed citizens, for all the world like his cousin, Duke Alessandro. But Lorenzo Priuli was specially pleased to relate any story to the Duke's discredit, having suffered from the severity of customs and regulations, which he looked on as an insult to his dignity as ambassador. "Since the death of the Duchess," he reports (and one can guess how readily certain Florentines had provided him with choice morsels of scandal), "laying aside all respect, he hath made love to many, and especially to one of the chief gentlewomen of Florence...." On the occasion of Johanna's entry, moreover, he had "been up late, masking himself more than once in one evening that he might not be known, always dancing with the same lady and indulging in a thousand follies little suited to his rank and still less to his years<sup>1</sup>." As Priuli, from Cosimo's pursuit of one lady, seems to argue that he therefore carried on an indefinite number of intrigues, so too he goes on to observe that, seeing this change in him, it might well be supposed that his former good qualities of constancy and continence were all due to his wife; that she had been the guiding spirit of all his policy and to her all his good fortune was due. The same position, it may be worth noting, is taken by Bernardo Segni who, though in his later years he was less opposed than before to the *principato*, echoes the traditional note of the Florentine exiles. All the evil Cosimo did was done on his own initiative but any good action was attributed to other influence. Segni, however, is perhaps alone in saying that Cosimo seldom of himself made a resolution, but depended mainly on his wife and her brother Don Francisco de Toledo<sup>2</sup>. It is

<sup>1</sup> Albèri, *op. cit.* vol. II. serie II. p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> Segni, *op. cit.* p. 450.

a statement for which it is singularly hard to find support, and it seems to me that Cosimo must himself be held responsible for his actions, both good and bad.

While, then, I find no trace of his having angered the Florentines by indiscriminate *amours*, it was well known that he had taken with him to his villa a beautiful Florentine girl of good birth. She belonged to the old family of the Albizzi, once a rival to the Medici, and now indeed sadly fallen since the intrigue was carried on with the full consent of the girl's father. Eleonora degli Albizzi lived for some time with the Duke, going with him to Portoferraio, Pisa, or wherever he chose to settle for the moment. He was so much attached to her, that when a son was born to them he had serious thoughts of marrying her. Among the specially favoured members of Cosimo's household was a young man named Sforza Almeni, who had been greatly benefited by his master. In spite of this, Sforza showed himself no better than the proverbial lacquey, and inclined to turn from his benefactor to the rising sun. For, judging from what he had heard and observed, he had reason to think that Cosimo intended to marry Eleonora and, knowing how deeply such a project would interest Francesco, seized an opportunity of speaking to the Prince. This occurred when the Duke had gone from Castello into Florence, and, as a result, there was an angry scene between father and son, Francesco reproaching the Duke and being told in return not to listen to servants' idle chatter. Knowing that Sforza must have betrayed him, Cosimo, on his return to Castello "icy and sinister," writes Signor Saltini, "said to him: 'Sforzo, get out of my sight, and leave my states without delay, and henceforth never count on me for anything whatsoever<sup>1</sup>.'" Sforza, struck dumb, hurried to Florence and sought speech with Francesco and Cosimo's favourite daughter, Isabella; but they,

<sup>1</sup> For all this see Saltini, *op. cit.* pp. 200, 209.

who had never liked the *cameriere* and had grudged him the benefits showered on him, paid no heed to his entreaties. Then, instead of leaving Tuscany as he was bidden, Sforza most unwisely lingered on, apparently unable to believe that Cosimo had entirely changed in his feelings for him. Such disobedience was the very thing to rouse the Duke's temper to fury, indignant as he already was over the attitude of Francesco, and, in an evil moment for Sforza, Cosimo came to Florence. The youth had not even had the prudence to keep away from the palace, and Cosimo's rage was unbounded when he unexpectedly met him in the Palazzo Pitti. It was too much to bear. The man, so often spoken of as wrathful and vindictive, at last justified his enemies, and, catching up a hunting spear, ran Sforza through the body, crying out : "Traditore, traditore!" that most deadly and only too common Italian accusation. And then, says Galluzzi, ashamed of his violence, he retired ill satisfied from Florence. But there is no reason to suppose that the Duke repented greatly of his action, except indeed—and the fact is one that vividly illustrates contemporary feeling—that he seriously regretted having with his own hand killed Sforza as being "too much honour for *him* so mean."

Sforza was not the only person to suffer. The Duke was possibly growing a little weary of Eleonora, who was flighty and at times far from decorous in her behaviour to him. He was intensely annoyed by all the publicity consequent on his hasty action, as well as by the evident dislike of his family to the idea of the marriage, and, venting his displeasure not in the most praiseworthy way, decided to put an end to the intrigue by finding Eleonora a husband as accommodating as her father. This he found in the person of a certain Carlo Panciatichi, under sentence of banishment for homicide, who was glad to have his sentence remitted at this price. (It was perhaps hardly the moment for Cosimo

to display great severity in dealing with Panciatichi's crime.) Into the further circumstances of Eleonora's rather sordid life we need not go. It is enough to mention that the most satisfactory feature of it was the pride that came to her through her natural son, Giovanni, who early went to the wars in the Low Countries and, though somewhat given to gambling, was greatly in request for his well known valour and his considerable ability in the science of fortification<sup>1</sup>. In him Eleonora found some consolation, and thus ends an unedifying episode of the Duke's career. The little Giovanni meanwhile grew up at his father's side with his eleven-year-old half-brother Pietro, and had no reason to complain of his fate.

In these years the course of political events is pleasanter reading to those who wish well to Cosimo  
1565-70 than his domestic history, and two events showed the value set on him by his contemporaries, namely the offer of Corsica and the augmentation of his title.

Two failures at least chequered Cosimo's many successes; the frustration of his attempts to secure from Charles V the neighbouring coast state of Piombino, and the curt refusal on the part of Philip II to consent to the Duke's accepting the government of Corsica. In the one case he was not powerful enough to put the necessary pressure on Charles, and in the other he was, by the irony of fate, too powerful, and nothing would induce Philip to consent to any extension of his authority.

That Corsica should have many links with Tuscany was only natural, lying as it does near the Tuscan coast. The warlike islanders had willingly sent recruits to Giovanni delle Bande Nere, and seem from that time forward to have cherished a kindly feeling for the

<sup>1</sup> Litta, *Famiglie Celebri d' Italia*.

younger line of the Medici. The island, which was always inclined to turbulence, from about the year 1550 was in open revolt against the harsh rule of the Genoese Republic, which had succeeded the Genoese Banca di San Giorgio in the government of Corsica. The Corsicans turned first to the French for help, and, France being in alliance with the Sultan, this was no good news to Cosimo. The Sienese war was on the point of breaking out, and Corsica was only too favourable a position for the French, and a convenient point from which, with their Turkish allies, to harry the Tuscan coast. “ ‘Twill be,’ ” wrote the Duke to his ambassador in Rome, “ a plague which will keep all these parts in travail, and Rome too will not laugh thereat<sup>1</sup>. ” But for the moment he could do nothing, and French and Turks took place after place on the island. When, however, it became apparent to the Corsicans that the French proposed to free the island from Genoa only to secure it for themselves, their feelings changed, and a considerable check was given to the progress of these allies who now seemed intruders. The French upon this, finding themselves involved in war with Cosimo over Siena, proposed a six months’ truce to the Duke, who pertinently enough answered the Pope, then acting as mediator: “ Let them restore Siena to her old and true liberty and restore Corsica to whomsoever it belongs and then let them demand I should be neutral<sup>2</sup>. ” This, then, was the first episode of French intervention in Corsica, which ended, after six years of war and much suffering, in the restoration of Corsica to Genoa by the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis in 1559. Bitter disappointment was felt in the island. Genoa, which for a time had tried wise and conciliatory measures, now returned to harsh and unjust dealing, and the islanders again prepared to shake off

<sup>1</sup> G. Livi, *La Corsica e Cosimo I de' Medici*, 1885, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 73.

the hated yoke. This time they appealed, with their leader Sampiero d' Ornano as spokesman, to Cosimo, looking on him as one always well affected to them; if he had, in the late war, favoured Genoa they knew that this was due to his longing to be rid both of French and infidels in his neighbourhood. And Cosimo was nothing loth to listen; let the Corsicans be driven to desperation and they would not stick at calling in the Turks, and, from whatever motives, Cosimo was a fairly consistent and vigorous opponent of Barbarossa and his like. "We have before pointed out this" (*i.e.* the possibility of a Turkish alliance with Corsica), he wrote to his ambassador in Spain, "and now more than ever you will remind his Majesty that it behoves us keep our eyes open and use the most diligent care." Now that Sampiero turned to him rather than to the Sultan, it seemed to Cosimo an occasion too good to be lost and he begged that Philip would allow him to intervene, meanwhile urging Sampiero to have patience. "For I hold you," he told him, "none the less too wise and well advised to suffer yourself to be so led by your passion that you will not rather have recourse to the aid and the means of Christian Princes than give yourself over a prey to the Infidels<sup>1</sup>." Sampiero in a letter to Prince Francesco, now Regent, replied in the same vein:

And therefore they (the Corsicans) are resolved to die sooner than remain subject to them (the Genoese); desiring rather to submit themselves to his Illustrious Excellency the Duke than to any other prince in Christendom, for our country hath ever been well affected and dutiful to your most excellent house<sup>2</sup>.

But Cosimo was soon to feel that, in spite of all his years of diplomacy and planning, he was by no means free from Spanish authority and that, though he had cajoled Philip into yielding him the investiture of Siena,

<sup>1</sup> G. LIVI, *op. cit.* p. 141.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 149.

the King in return owed him a lasting grudge. Philip II indeed, never, after his first years of government, showed himself very favourable to Cosimo, seeing in him not so much a bulwark of Spanish power in Italy as a prince likely to threaten the advancement of that power—nor can one doubt that he was right in his distrust which does honour rather than otherwise to the Duke of Florence. Feeling ran high against Cosimo in these days at the Spanish Court. Philip having categorically refused to let the Duke accept Sampiero's offer, Cosimo suggested that he should provide men and money if necessary to hold the island in Philip's interest. This, however, was no more acceptable, as the French ambassador to Spain reported. Philip hoped to settle Corsican affairs himself:

si bien qu'il n'estoit besoing qu'autre s'en melast. Cognoissant bien Sa Majesté Catholique que c'estoit un trait semblable a celuy de Sienne, dict que le duc de Florence descouroit trop son ambition, et qu'il s'en pourroit bien se repentir<sup>1</sup>. (Nov. 1564.)

As for the Genoese agent, he wrote with some violence to the Signoria:

Throughout this Court 'tis said freely that the said *Sagacity* favours Sampiero the Corsican, and designs to make himself master of Corsica.... And I promise Vostre Signorie Illustrissime that, if an expedition were to be made conformable to the wishes of this Court and of all Spain, 'twould be undertaken against none other but the aforesaid *Sagacity*, of whose greed and astuteness they talk here as freely as may be<sup>2</sup>.

Philip, however, could do no more than thwart the Duke, who was too powerful to be altogether antagonised, and this he consistently did, turning a deaf ear when Sampiero's son, after his father had been killed, again renewed the tempting offer. Nor did Alfonso alone make the request, for the Duke, not satisfied with his assurances, demanded a more repre-

<sup>1</sup> G Livi, *op cit* p. 165

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 174.

sentative petition. Sampiero then, assembling a Council of Twelve, sent from them a despatch confirming his action and begging to be delivered from the Genoese, whom they flatteringly described as "these ravening wolves," begging the Duke to "chastise them for their hateful sins and vices....<sup>1</sup>" Cosimo did his best, and his words had some force: for, he urged, failing help from him or from Spain, the Corsicans would turn either to France or to the Turk:

which cannot come about without great travail to the States of your Majesty; and I, beside the fact that I am known as one of the most devoted followers of your Majesty, am so near at hand that I should ever be in disquiet and put to grave expense and trouble, which would turn out to the disservice and displeasure of your Majesty....

And Ruy Gomez, Philip's powerful minister, agreed with Cosimo, said the Tuscan ambassador, adding:

...he swore to me that he knows verily that what your Excellency had proposed to his Majesty was true, in that you made clear the dangers which threatened his Majesty's affairs in Italy while Corsica was ever thus likely to fall into the hands of the French...but his Majesty's great desire to leave things as he hath found them, causes him to desire no meddling in any matter to the prejudice of any.

Philip, it may be added, could not forego the pleasure of checking the Duke, nor forget that the possession of Corsica might entitle him to the name of King. In repeating his refusal to hear of Cosimo's intervention he went near threatening him: "I would not," he said, "that my arms should come in conflict with yours<sup>2</sup>." It was Corsica that suffered most, in all probability, from the failure of the project, since the condition of Tuscany was enviable indeed compared to the lot of the island for many years to come.

The ill-feeling aroused in Spain, however, continued after this episode was past, and nothing shows more plainly the strength of Cosimo's position than the fact

<sup>1</sup> G. Livi, *op. cit.* p. 210.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, pp. 205, 217, 214

that, in spite of smouldering hostility and passive opposition on the part of Philip, he was able to achieve one last object of his ambition, the augmentation of his title. Not that the Duke had wished to alienate Spain in this matter. On the contrary, he first looked to Philip for help in the attainment of his long-cherished wish to demonstrate his increasing power by some outward tokens, and did all he could to secure his favour and confidence. But it was beyond even his ingenuity to make his aims agree with those of the King of Spain. Philip was strongly opposed to any changes in Italy and had no wish that one "who had been benefited by him should increase his power without him<sup>1</sup>." Smarting, too, under the conviction that Cosimo had outwitted him over the cession of Siena, he would listen to no new proposals. The Duke's visit to Rome as long ago as 1560 had had for one of its objects some augmentation of his title, but the time was not yet ripe and Philip's veto put a stop to everything; the Duke had shown his hand too soon. He therefore took every precaution in order that a second attempt might be successful, and his agents were particularly busy in trying to win him friends—of a venal sort—at Vienna. He also hoped to smooth his way both at the Imperial and Spanish courts by his abdication, which was an act of deference to the Emperor, for by this act Cosimo gave up his authority, not only to his son, but also to the Archduchess Johanna<sup>2</sup>. Francesco moreover was not likely to cause Philip the uneasiness he was apt to feel while Cosimo was ruling.

The new negotiations, however, bore no fruit, and Cosimo's envoy lamented the squandering of good money. The proposal of the title of Archduke was unacceptable, and was rejected on the ground that

<sup>1</sup> So wrote Vincenzo Fedeli, see V. Maffei, *op. cit.* Also for what follows.

<sup>2</sup> This is the opinion of Signor Maffei, which seems very probable.

other claimants to it, such as the electors, might arise, to the lowering of Habsburg dignity, while there was a technical difficulty, in the fact that it implied authority over subject dukes. Spain and Austria being thus either hostile or indifferent, Cosimo somewhat changed his policy and turned to the Pope as the only remaining prince able to content him. It suited him now that Philip should be harassed, whether in France or Flanders, whether by the Moors or Turks, for thus the King could give less attention to Italian affairs, and moreover if, as was more than likely, money was scarce in Spain, Cosimo might have a chance of making himself indispensable once more<sup>1</sup>. "The princes of Europe," Pius IV had justly remarked, "are so poor that they have not a loaf wherewith to stay their hunger." But in 1565 Cosimo's firm supporter, Pius IV, was succeeded by the rigid Pius V and this gave the Duke pause for some years, until the Pope had become almost as warm an adherent of Cosimo as his predecessor. This was due, at least in part, to the Duke's highly orthodox and uncompromising views on heresy. This subject was dwelt on in the last chapter and it was shown that Cosimo had not been forgetful of his own interests in the case of Carnesecchi. But it was also urged that the Duke's detestation of heretics was not assumed, nor even used as a means of furthering his own ends, but that it was the prevalent sentiment of the times in which Cosimo shared as sincerely, if not so fanatically, as Philip II. His consistency on this head was doubly welcome to Pius at a time when, in his view, much harm had been done in Germany by concessions due (as he would think) merely to political considerations, and when Catherine de Médicis was even more openly subordinating religion to questions of expediency. For this reason Cosimo, following the suggestion of the Pope, in 1567 refused supplies of

<sup>1</sup> Maffei, *op. cit.* p. 18.

money to Catherine, since, though they were ostensibly to be used against the Huguenots, he had no confidence that they might not be diverted to other purposes. He sent troops indeed that year to the Duke of Savoy who was fighting heretics, and promised men next year to France, when war had definitely been declared against the Huguenots; but for all that he had no very firm conviction that this was the best way to deal with the sectaries. It was better, he judged, to "ruin them rather in peace than in war." Writing on this subject to his ambassador in Rome he said :

Let his Holiness reflect, that, by tormenting that kingdom (France) with warfare, enemies to the King and the Catholic religion are daily made, nor can his Holiness, for all the help he gives, remedy this... whereas, were the kingdom in peace and quiet, it were in the power of his Majesty to quell these iniquitous seducers, and thus by degrees with ease bring back the residue to the bosom of the Roman Church<sup>1</sup>.

In giving which opinion, Cosimo probably judged the religious movement in France from what he had seen of it in Italy, where there was little enthusiastic popular response.

Pius, then, was well satisfied that Cosimo, even if recalcitrant on the subject of the Inquisition in Tuscany, would at least have no compromising with heretics, and he had also been heard to say that he wished he had the Duke of Florence as coadjutor. Cosimo chose this favourable moment for sending Cardinal Ferdinando to Rome, to further Medici interests in general and in particular to ensure, if possible, the creation of Cardinals well disposed to his family. Ferdinando, throughout the eighteen years during which he chiefly lived in Rome, was both respected and influential. As has been mentioned, he never took orders, and his outlook on life was rather that of a stately secular prince than that of a churchman in the late sixteenth century. Yet in his

<sup>1</sup> Cosci, *Preponderanze Straniere*, p. 163.

lack of religious professions he likely enough showed more honesty than some of his colleagues, to all appearance more devoutly minded. To Rome then came Ferdinando and was lodged, not in the palace bequeathed by Pius IV to Giovanni, but in one in the Campo Marzio, which had before been the property of Baldovino del Monte. Here, in the apartments gay with frescoes by Primaticcio and lately enlarged by order of the Duke from Vignola's design, he was ready to receive his father when, next year, Cosimo reached the culminating point of his dignity and was solemnly crowned Grand Duke. For this purpose a papal Bull was published, stating the competence of the Pope to grant such a title, and containing (among other details) minute directions for the design of the Granducal crown. This had to be carefully differentiated from the French and Spanish, and above all the Imperial, crowns. On its inner rim were to be the words: *Beneficio Pii V. Pont. Max.*, and the model, proposed by Cosimo, was the old *corona radiata* as it was called, having in the middle a *fleur de lys* gules, the emblem of the Florentine Republic. From this radiated twenty-one points; one plain, one as it were bottonny and one as it were flory; a plain point alternating between each ornamented one. This was duly engraved in the Bull which was signed on August 27th, 1569. As a token of gratitude, Cosimo undertook to provide four galleys for the defence of the Roman shore at his own expense, if Pius on his part would allow him the services of men condemned to the oar in the states of the Church, and share the task of provisioning the ships. The Duke next sent envoys to Austria and Spain, stating the intentions of Pius, but prudently arranged they should not arrive in time to hinder the publishing of the Bull, if such an increase of his dignity were looked on unfavourably by Maximilian and Philip.

Pius sent his great-nephew, Don Michele Bonelli, to

bring the Bull to Florence, and he was met at the confines of Siena by several Florentine gentlemen. On his arrival at the gates of Florence, he was greeted by the Duke's three sons, Francesco, Ferdinando and Pietro, and entered the town to the sound of a concert of music, interrupted by the beating of drums. He first went to the Palazzo Ducale and next made a formal visit to the Duke in the Palazzo Pitti when December 13th, 1569, was fixed on for the publication of the Bull. The following day, relates an old diary:

the said Grand Duke came the said morning to hear the said mass in Santa Maria del Fiore, borne by his serving men in a chair, for that he had gout in his foot....That morning all the galleries of the Dome (of the Cathedral) were full of blazing torches, a truly fine sight. All day the bells rang and at night there were bonfires with a great noise of guns<sup>1</sup>.

Hastily the Medicean arms throughout Florence appeared surmounted with the graceful new crown, in one place with the following lines engraved beneath the shield: *Hoc Duce tota suo grandebit Etruria magno.* The Florentines too were duly instructed that his Excellency must now be addressed as *Altezza* and *Serenissimo*.

Meanwhile, the news of the papal Bull was causing lively indignation at the Spanish and Imperial courts, while among the Italian princes Este, in particular, fanned the flame of resentment at Vienna. The rumours rife in Venice were, if anything, wilder than ever. Cosimo, ran the report, was on the point of being crowned King of England by the Pope, as a kingdom which had lapsed and devolved to the papacy. With his aid Pius would chastise the Lucchesi for their heresy, and take Modena and Reggio from the Duke of Ferrara. And finally, the King of Spain being engaged in the war with the Low Countries, and the King of

<sup>1</sup> C Firmando, *Della Solenne Incoronazione del Duca Cosimo de' Medici in Granduca di Toscana...* (Firenze, 1819), pp. xlvi and xlvii.

France in that with the Admiral<sup>1</sup>, his Holiness (realising that there was no help in them) would crown Cosimo King of the Romans to secure the Holy See from the invasion of the Huguenots<sup>2</sup>.

Cosimo was undoubtedly prepared for opposition, but this time it came too late to frustrate him. Justifying Philip of Spain's reference to him as an "old fox," he stole a march on the slow-moving courts of Vienna and Madrid, by going to Rome in February of 1570, ostensibly on a simple visit of thanks to the Pope for having sent him the Bull, but really in order to be actually crowned by Pius, as the angry sovereigns discovered later to their intense chagrin.

The stir caused by this action shows what value was set on titles, and, though the Granducal crown may seem to us a petty result of a life's work, to Cosimo and his contemporaries it meant more than we can well understand. No stronger instance of the weight of Spanish influence in Italy can be given than the excessive value set on rank or title, the exaggerated attention given to precedence and ceremonial, for these are Spanish, not Italian, traits. In these respects, Cosimo himself was something of a Spaniard, and if the Granducal crown was his heart's desire, it cannot be denied that his rule of Tuscany deserved the recognition he was pleased to choose.

It was then in February 1570 that Cosimo set out on what was to be his last journey—indeed practically 1570 his last appearance in public—and if he himself was acutely conscious that, in his baggage, a precious casket held the new Granducal crown, we may be sure that with his usual secrecy and silence he kept the knowledge to himself. Precisely at what stage of the proceedings Pius was made aware that the Duke expected to be crowned we do not know; he complained

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* Coligny.

<sup>2</sup> Maffei, *op. cit.* p. 75

afterwards that his hand had been forced, but relations between him and Cosimo continued friendly to the end. Leaving such jarring notes to come later, let us devote a few pages to the description of these last honours which were paid without stint to Cosimo, and let us hope that the memory of the losses he had suffered since he had visited Rome with his wife and the two sons so dear to him, did not make the present triumph too hollow a one.

Distinctions were lavished on him from the moment of his crossing the papal frontier; another papal great-nephew, Girolamo Bonelli, met him with a large retinue; many nobles came to Monte Rossi in the train of Marcantonio Colonna; eight Cardinals met him at La Storta, the last halting place before Rome; eight more received him at the charming villa of Pope Julius III (then in all its fresh beauty as Vignola and Michelangelo designed it) and there the Imperial, French and Spanish ambassadors awaited him. Cornelio Firmano, papal Master of the Ceremonies, omitting no detail, tells us that Cosimo on his journey wore "a mantle of cloth with long sleeves and very full, and a wide-brimmed felt hat<sup>1</sup>." Behind the accompanying Cardinals came "a Page bearing a pennon, whereon was painted the likeness of a Tortoise with a sail above it," this, with the motto, *Festina lente*, being the device of the Duke of Florence. Alessandro de' Pazzi writes to his friend, Giuliano Buonaccorsi, in Florence on February 20th:

We reached the vigna of Pope Julius at the 23rd hour of the 16th, where we dismounted and Sua Altezza was received by the Cardinals Montepulciano, Ferrara, Savello.... When it was evening, Sua Altezza got into a coach and with the Cardinals Alessandrino, Pacecco (*sic*) and Medici and two nephews of Sua Santità, went privately to visit Sua Beatitudine... who went to meet him as far as the

<sup>1</sup> "Habebat ipse tabarrum panni, cum manicis longis amplissimum, et cappellum largum de feltro." Firmano, *op. cit.* p. 4.

door of the first chamber, and they stayed together, seated by themselves, for half an hour and then Sua Altezza went back to the vigna<sup>1</sup>.

On Saturday, February 18th, Cosimo made his solemn entry into Rome, to be received by the Pope in full concistory. The Duke rode a jennet and was followed by a splendid retinue. "The pages," reports Firmano, "had caps of velvet,...with violet strings and gold lace; shoes of velvet likewise with knee-breeches of violet satin and cloaks of the same colour, of cloth, with a border of violet satin about a hand's breadth in width...."<sup>2</sup>

The Governor of Rome and all the pontifical court met Cosimo at the Porta del Popolo, lately restored by Pius IV, so that the Medici arms, even though borne by one who had no right to them, gave the Duke a pleasant sense of familiarity as he rode through the archway. The Florentines and Sienese in Rome now swelled the procession, and the road was lined by the Swiss Guard and the Tuscan Guard. Thus the gay train swept on, along the Via di Ripetta, past the great stair of the Church of Sant' Agostino, through the Via di Tor Sanguigno, by Monte Giordano the Orsini stronghold and so over Ponte Sant' Angelo and up the Borgo to the Vatican. Men had to go back to the days of Leo X to recall such a brilliant sight, and indeed it was long since any secular prince had come to ask a favour of the Pope. To one who looked below the surface, a faint sense of change and unreality may have pervaded the scene, if he reflected on those glittering days of fifty years before, when the splendour of the papacy presaged its decline only to those who were wise after the event. But at the moment, no doubt, most men were fully occupied by the magnificence of the sight before their eyes in the long hall of the Vatican, glowing with the rich colours of the newly frescoed

<sup>1</sup> Firmano, *op. cit.* p. lii.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 9.

walls. Here Cosimo was received in the Sala Regia by the Pope in full concistory, and at once the Imperial and Portuguese ambassadors took umbrage and withdrew, for he was invited to seat himself, and this privilege was only granted as a rule to crowned heads.

On the following Sunday Cosimo, intent apparently on securing the rights which Pius only intended to concede on investing him with his new rank, made a point of attending mass in the papal chapel. The Pope had gone so far as to hint that he did not wish the Duke to be urged to come if he were tired, but that he could not hinder him if he had a great wish to pay his devotions. Cosimo, refusing to see the Pope's intention, not only came, but, regardless of the niceties of precedence on which he was trampling, took his place between two Cardinal priests—"and did ill," says the indignant Master of the Ceremonies, for this privilege the Pope had not meant to grant before his coronation. None, however, interfered with him, and he assisted at mass, a stately figure in a short black satin robe lined with fur, wearing the order of the Golden Fleece. That same Sunday, "I saw . . .," says Firmano, ". . . the Cardinals Alessandrino and Medici and the Lord Duke going to make the Stations<sup>1</sup>, in a coach, and, as I heard said, in the Church whither they went, the Duke walked in the middle between the two most reverend Cardinals." On the Monday following the third Sunday in Lent, the Duke "went to the seven churches<sup>2</sup>, and returning late to the basilica of S. Peter's, prayed before the seven altars, and then, kneeling on the Faldstool made ready for him, saw the

<sup>1</sup> This being the second Sunday in Lent, the Station (or Church to be visited where the relics, etc., would be displayed) would be at Santa Maria in Domnica.

<sup>2</sup> The seven churches would be the seven major basilicas San Giovanni in Laterano, San Pietro in Vaticano, San Paolo fuori le Mura, San Lorenzo fuori le Mura, Santa Maria Maggiore, Santa Croce in Gerusalemme and San Sebastiano.

Holy Face and the Lance<sup>1</sup>." Firmano also tells us that Donna Isabella Orsini had come to Rome the day after her father and lodged with her brother the Cardinal, so that we can picture the Duke, in the intervals between serious discourse with the Pope, enjoying some familiar talk and driving about in his lumbering though stately coach.

Then came the day when the crown so jealously concealed was to be worn, Sunday the 5th March, being the fourth Sunday in Lent known as *Laetare*<sup>2</sup>. Cosimo was ready betimes, dressed "in an under robe of brocaded cloth of gold, girt with a sword overlaid with gold supported by a crimson belt, and over it a long robe to the ground, open in front, of crimson velvet, with wide sleeves to the elbow lined with ermine . . . and wearing his accustomed cap of black velvet." He went from the apartment of the Torre Borgia where he was now lodged to the other side of the Vatican palace, accompanied by many nobles who attended him to the presence of the Pope. Pius was a little delayed, being obliged to listen to the protests of the Imperial ambassador, but at last he appeared robed in his vestments, "the Lord Duke bearing the train of his cope," and entered the Sistine Chapel where the soft radiance of the altar lights shone on the gorgeous tapestries of Raphael's design and gleamed on jewelled vestments and silver vessels. Cosimo as before took his seat between the last two Cardinal priests, and mass was begun and continued as usual until the Gospel had been read, when Marcantonio Colonna and Paolo Giordano Orsini (husband of Isabella de' Medici) came forward, having stood aside up till then to avoid complications as to precedence with ambassadors. And indeed these hereditary enemies had their own questions

<sup>1</sup> The relics of S. Veronica and of Longinus kept in S. Peter's.

<sup>2</sup> So called because the Introit for the day begins. *Laetare, Jerusalem.*

of punctilio to settle, for as they came from the sacristy the Master of the Ceremonies said "with a loud voice that they came without prejudice to themselves and their families...this being the only way to content Paolo Giordano, for that Marcantonio had the more honourable place<sup>1</sup>." Firmano then led the Duke to the steps of the altar where he took the oath on the Sacrament. "Receive the Crown," ran the Pope's adjuration, "...and know thou art called on to be the defender of the faith,...bound to protect all widows and orphans and whoso is in misery, and mayst thou ever show thyself a ready servant and a notable Ruler in the sight of God<sup>2</sup>." Colonna held the crown, Orsini the sceptre; Pius kissed the kneeling Cosimo on both cheeks and, he returning to his place, mass went on. At the Offertory the Grand Duke gave rich gifts; a chalice of the rarest workmanship, the design being three figures, Faith, Hope and Charity, holding in their hands the cup; a small cross of choice diamonds; six silver basins brought by six of his chamberlains and valuable embroideries for the papal altars. Finally the Pope blessed the Golden Rose and, when they left the Chapel, gave it to Cosimo who knelt bare-headed to receive it. Then, taking his sceptre and crowned with his new crown, Cosimo, bearing the rose according to custom, was accompanied in solemn procession by the Cardinals to Torre Borgia, walking between the two senior Deacons and followed by all the others of the Sacred College then present. "And," says Firmano, "having arrived at the said hall, he went with the rose in his hand to thank the Cardinals who stood round, and continued standing till they were all of them gone, having the rose always in his hand but the crown laid

<sup>1</sup> Firmano, *op. cit* p. 26. I give what I take to be the sense, although the Latin runs thus. "nam eo modo et non alias Paulus Jordanus nolebat dare dignorem locum praedicto Marco Antonio "

<sup>2</sup> *Idem.*

aside." The gout which, according to the Master of the Ceremonies, had forced Pius to give Cosimo a seat at the concistory, had opportunely disappeared. The great event was over, and Cosimino, son of Madonna Maria, whom every Florentine had thought he could bend to his pleasure, was now the great Cosimo, Grand Duke of Tuscany, with all his faults and his failings, one of the few arresting figures among Italian rulers of his day.

Cosimo had once more carried out his design in the teeth of opposition. But he was not to escape plenty of odium, and only his strong position reduced Maximilian and Philip to be content with railing. This, however, they did with great vigour and all the will in the world to rob Cosimo of his new honours. Even the Pope began to resent being forced to support him for the sake of his own prestige, and it is abundantly clear that the Grand Duke would never have attained his end but for his promptness in following up his advantage. When once the Pope was, so to say, publicly involved, it was a complicated and delicate matter for him to undo his own work, however the princes might rage. This they too realised, and Pius V (so reports Concini):

said to Monsignor Noferi<sup>1</sup>, without any beating about the bush (*fuori de' denti*) that the Emperor's motive (in so acting) was due to the most Catholic King who had said to a certain person that your Highness tricked him when you wrote you were coming to Rome to kiss his Holiness' feet, when you came in truth to be crowned, bringing the crown in a chest, and that your Highness had chosen a time when his Majesty was engaged with the Moors, and had served him the same when you wrested Siena from him<sup>2</sup>.

Monsignor Onofrio Camaiani adding himself in another letter that the Pope had said of the coronation: "if your Highness, after speaking thereof, had consented to forego it, these rumours would not have arisen." No,

<sup>1</sup> I.e. Monsignor Onofrio Camaiani.

<sup>2</sup> Maffei, *op. cit.* p. 78.

Cosimo might well have replied, but neither should I now be Grand Duke. As it was, Philip, furious indeed at this new dignity gained by Cosimo, yet had his hands tied by his desire not to antagonise the Pope just when schemes were on foot for an expedition against the Turks, and thus (wrote the Tuscan ambassador to the Spanish Court) was in a dilemma, “for neither justice nor the condition of the times admits of their opposing it (the new title) openly, and yet to concede it seems to them grievous and to their own prejudice,...nor can they secretly disturb the Duke or they would do so<sup>1</sup>. ”

The Venetian ambassador to Savoy, Lippomano, in his *relazione* to the Senate of 1573 observed: “I would fain say freely now that I am here in the Senate, that he (Cosimo) bought this title dear at the price of the hatred of certain princes of Italy, aye, and of more than one<sup>2</sup>,” which would indeed have been a true criticism had Cosimo ever been greatly loved by his fellow-rulers. As it was, we may sympathise with his constant longing to be independent of Spain, and a power in Italy, and may admire the steady concentration of purpose which in the end wore down even Philip II’s stubborn opposition. Open methods would be more to our liking, but Cosimo had seen what would be the inevitable reply from Spain to a straightforward demand and, when it was essential to his ends, not Philip himself could be more secret and inscrutable than he. During the lifetime of the first Grand Duke, the question of sanctioning his title was left pending. First one, then another power began, as it were, unofficially to recognise it, until only the Emperor, the King of Spain and the Duke of Ferrara still held out. Este, in Galluzzi’s opinion, did himself no good in so stubbornly refusing to acknowledge a papal title as valid, for the irritation which this caused in Rome was

<sup>1</sup> Maffei, *op. cit.* pp. 79, 82.

<sup>2</sup> Livi, *op. cit.* p. 225.

afterwards felt by him very sensibly when the question came up of the succession to the duchy. Ferrara was a papal fief in fact, and, Alfonso having no children, the Pope exercised his veto and refused to give Cardinal d'Este (Alfonso's brother) dispensation to marry and carry on the succession, Ferrara thus lapsing to the Holy See. Este, oblivious of the fact that all this Italian discord only furthered the increase of Spanish authority, was but fulfilling the traditions of his race and fostering that fatal rivalry thanks to which, if Farnese was at peace with Medici, Este must be hostile; if Este was friendly, Savoy was incensed, while the Venetian Republic would add another jarring note by complaining of the Knights of S. Stefano<sup>1</sup>. Tuscany, almost alone of Italian states was, to a great extent at least, independent of Spain, becoming in the days of Ferdinando I (that son after Cosimo's own heart) unquestionably the best governed and most prosperous part of Italy. Nor should it be forgotten how much of that future well-being was due to the steady determination of Cosimo to be, first and foremost, an Italian prince.

To end the question of the title, it may be added that Francesco eventually gained a double sanction of it, as the Emperor also gave him a diploma, carefully worded so as in no way to encroach on papal prerogatives, while Spain was left to digest this affront as best it could:

"In Spain," observes Signor Maffei, "they were still discussing the exact wording of the title, and whether it would be best to choose the form of Grand Duke of Tuscany or Grand Duke *in* Tuscany, when they heard the matter had been disposed of and so were forced to desist henceforth from what had become vain and wearisome obstinacy. The Italian princes still made an outcry, but the importance of the whole matter was ended by the Imperial decree of Ratisbon which it was useless to oppose<sup>2</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> Galluzzi, *op. cit.* vol. iv. p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> Maffei, *op. cit.* p. 103

## CHAPTER IX

### MEDITERRANEAN WARFARE—COSIMO'S GALLEYS—HIS SECOND MARRIAGE—HIS DEATH

YET the Granducal title was not the only subject of Cosimo's reflections or of his talk with Pius V on his last visit to Rome. This was the year of the war of Cyprus, when Venice was again left to bear the brunt of battle with the Turks and lost the island after the heroic defence of Famagosta. The Turkish raids on Italy, the siege of Malta, the battles with Christian fleets, have been already referred to, and, rather than give a dry statement of Cosimo's naval forces and the engagements in which they had an increasing share, I propose to sketch very briefly the history of that Mediterranean warfare which absorbed so much of the Duke's thoughts and energy. He was now bent on stimulating Pius V to preach a crusade against the Turks, though the past might have taught him the uselessness of such an effort. But it was never the difficulties of an enterprise that daunted Cosimo, as the story of his navy very clearly shows. In this as in other actions, his single unswerving purpose is very remarkable when contrasted with the shifting counsels and vacillating policy of his contemporaries. Cosimo's character was no finer than theirs, but his will was firmer and his brain clearer; he would succeed where they failed. What, then, was his purpose in building and equipping a fleet? since it is not to be supposed that he had high or religious motives for joining in the war on the Turks. Cosimo, like the other princes of his day, no doubt represented to the Pope that the lukewarmness of the Christian powers was disgraceful; with him, as with them, these remonstrances represented the official view of the case.

But there were other determining motives. It is not easy, in touching on this question, to draw the line; to avoid the wholesale condemnation of that secret dealing with the infidel in which not only the most Christian, but even the most Catholic, King was implicated, and, on the other hand, to keep from condoning altogether what was surely a sad thing, an unnatural connection, brought about not by wise statesmanship but by a policy of self-seeking and egoism. Yet, even if we look on it apart from its religious aspect, the Turkish warfare of the sixteenth century is among the dark pages of history, telling as it does of little but dissension and treachery, of flight before the enemy, of betrayal and desertion. Thanks to such intrigues, Italy lived for years in haunting terror of the Turks, and no little seaport town, nestling, a huddled mass of grey roofs against sun-scorched rocks, can have existed untroubled by the nightmare of a Turkish raid on its harbour from the terrible sack of Otranto in 1480 until, nearly a hundred years later, the day had dawned of October 7th, 1571.

Let us dwell for a moment on these intervening years and realise how things had changed for the worse in Italy and how grave was the Turkish peril which even threatened Rome, so that San Gallo's new fortifications were designed to protect the Leonine city and the Vatican itself. For the renowned navies of Genoa and Venice, the fleets of France and Spain, fared ill during these years in the Mediterranean. To the selfish petty jealousies between the Italian states succeeded a general mistrust of Spain which, in the end, paralysed all attempts at united action. It is indeed amazing, not that Venice distrusted the bare mention of a league and showed herself slow to act in concert with Spanish or papal admirals, but rather that anyone had the courage ever to take command of such heterogeneous fleets as were got together in those days, one

or two of whose leaders might safely be assumed to be obeying secret and possibly contradictory orders. Henri II succeeded to François I, Dragut to Barbarossa; the Catholic King followed the Emperor as ostensible defender of Christendom, but all the while the same wearisome and more or less shameful intrigues went on. The Kings of France, in their intense rivalry with Charles V and Philip II, openly supported the Turkish pirates, but even more grievous were the private overtures of Charles V, whose political needs brought him into conflict with Venice to the detriment of his zeal for the faith. It appears, in fact, that the ignominious flight of the Christian fleet at La Prévesa<sup>1</sup> in 1538, before an enemy only half as strong, was due to a secret understanding between Andrea D'Oria, the admiral in command, and his ostensible enemy, Barbarossa. By the terms of this agreement, the latter was offered the kingdom of Tunis if he left Charles' dominions in peace, and thus D'Oria made a mere feint of fighting to save appearances with the Venetian and Roman admirals, who were burning to attack; Barbarossa on his side doing the same to satisfy his own masters<sup>2</sup>. The sufferers by these intrigues were the Italian states, in particular Venice, and yearly the harrying and ravaging of the coast went on, from Apulia away up to Liguria, and the prestige of the infidels grew. It was enough for them to be seen and the Christians were ready to flee, until at last the admiral himself could give the order "Up anchor! Let us be off," at the bare sight of a sail which he took to be Turkish reinforcements. He was leaving to their fate a handful of men in garrison, last remnants of Charles V's once famous expedition to Tunis, but this counted for little with him, so far had extended the sapping of courage and the undermining of discipline which were

<sup>1</sup> Also called Prevyza, situated on a promontory in Asia Minor

<sup>2</sup> C. Manfroni, *L' Empia Alleanza, Rivista Marittima*, 1896.



*Giorgio Vasari*

*Photo Brogi*

COSIMO AND THE FORTIFICATIONS OF ELBA  
From a picture in the Palazzo Vecchio



the natural results of such double-dealing as I have touched on. New necessities, new combinations of powers, may have forced Spain, Austria and France to adopt the modern policy of admitting Turkey into the European sphere of politics, using her as an ally, as a counterpoise to other states. But the sentiment of the times was against them, and while for their own ends they in reality ran counter to it, they lacked the courage to do so openly, and in their false position were driven into a network of plot and counter-plot which in the end turned more or less to their own confusion. Meanwhile, imperial admirals might be merely acting under orders not to fight, in pursuance of Charles' or Philip's complicated statecraft, but to those who were not in the secret—to the Italian states and to the sailors—the D'Orias, uncle and nephew, seemed stained with cowardice and the crews of their ships caught the terrible infection of fear.

In the midst of this disarray, Cosimo began quietly and steadily to create a small but trustworthy fleet, not only to supplement the coast defence, but also, as Professor Manfroni argues, to give him greater security in his dealings with Spain. The galleys were for the Turkish war, in which they distinguished themselves, but they served the purpose also of protecting the Duke from French, no less than Turkish, raids during the war with Siena, and their help (so he hoped) might eventually be welcome to Philip himself. The building of this small fleet in the face of very many and very serious difficulties is, in fact, far more intelligible if we look on it as part of Cosimo's lifelong policy of emancipating himself, and with himself Tuscany, from the power of Spain, for though the Sienese territory lay more exposed to pirates, his own shores at the time he began ship-building were little accessible to raids, and still more secured from attack after his fortification of Portoferraio on the island of Elba. And

we may well suppose that Cosimo's ambition already embraced Siena, which, if it did not fall to him, must surely become either French or Spanish, since stand alone it could not, owing to the citizens' incapacity for strong self-government.

But to the eyes of his contemporaries, this navy stood rather for a new means of defence against the Turks, and this too, if in reality a secondary object to Cosimo, was never neglected by him. His new acquisition, the island of Elba, was ever well guarded from attack under Cosimo's rule; in later years he was always prompt in defending the Sienese littoral, with or without great assistance from Philip's Spanish garrisons, and to Tuscany one result of his policy was that at least the horrors of a raid, whether of Turks or of renegade pirates, were unknown throughout his states. And this is much, for from Villafranca to Reggio the infidels' progress was marked not only by smoking villages and ruined crops but too often by shameless treachery and broken faith, such as that which ended in Marcantonio Bragadin's agonising death at Famagosta, or the slaughter of the garrison at S. Bonifacio in Corsica. But the tide was turning, and while the creation of Cosimo's fleet was one of the first signs of returning spirit in naval warfare, the first check the Turks had met with on land for many a year in Italy was due to his brave captain, Chiappino Vitelli. In 1555 the Turkish fleet had landed at Piombino and was sacking and plundering. Vitelli, with three hundred light horse, was sent against them, but, mistaking the spot where they meant to land, was separated from the main body of his men whom he had sent on to Populonia. Nevertheless he charged bravely with what soldiers he had, "*et fut la mêlée longue, sanglante et dangereuse pour les Chrestiens, parceque les Turcs se renforçoient continuellement de ceux qui sortoient des galères.*" The remaining light horse, urgently summoned, were out-

distanced by those best mounted, who galloped up, blowing horns and trumpets, with pennons waving, as if the whole troop were there, so that the Turks, dismayed, withdrew in disorder after heavy loss<sup>1</sup>. It was time that the Christians bestirred themselves: "Hast thou not heard," said the Sultan (so goes the tale) "that the Turks call the leagues of the Christians brooms, that are loosely tied, which never sweep but badly, since they fall to pieces so soon as they are used?"<sup>2</sup>

Thus, if Cosimo's tenacity had more than one reason, the question of defence against the Turk was at least a strong secondary motive. In the main, however, we may conclude that his insistence on holding and fortifying Elba (where lay one of his best harbours, Portoferraio), and his perseverance in the slow forming of his navy may probably be referred to his constant policy of seeking to escape the octopus tentacles of Spain. "A man," said the Duke to Fedeli, "is not powerful unless he is powerful both by land and by sea"<sup>3</sup>, and, starting from this premiss, he began in his usual methodical way to secure what power he could. His first galleys were built in 1547, at a time when the conspiracies of Burlamacchi and Gian Luigi Fiesco, taken together with affairs in Naples and a French league with the Pope, brought home to Charles V the danger of alienating Cosimo. He was therefore allowed to fortify Portoferraio and other places on the island of Elba, and for a time also held Piombino, though subject to restoring it, if called on, to the Appiani, its hereditary rulers; a condition which, thanks to Genoese envy, soon was insisted on. His new possessions gave him a firmer naval base, and thus, the necessary impetus

<sup>1</sup> Boissat, *Le Brillant de la Royne*, p. 316.

<sup>2</sup> C. Capasso, *La Politica di Papa Paolo III e l' Italia* (Camerino, 1901) The speech quoted may be legendary as it is given by the untrustworthy Gregorio Leti, but it is at least characteristic.

<sup>3</sup> C. Manfroni, *La Marina di Guerra del Granducato Mediceo. Rivista Marittima*, 1895 (April), p. 82.

being given, Cosimo began to develop the natural resources of Tuscany for ship-building. The fir-trees and evergreen oaks of the Pisan woods, once used for the galleys of the Florentines' bitter enemy, were cut down; looms for weaving sailcloth were set up and an arsenal established at Pisa which was itself to be the centre of naval preparations. But there was at first a difficulty in finding rowers, since the Tuscans were no practised seamen. Criminals from the prisons did not prove very strong (hardly a surprising fact) and so far no prisoners of war had been made. Many devices were resorted to, says Ranke. A monk, well acquainted with Chios, Cyprus and other Eastern places, provided a number of Greeks for the purpose, on condition of their being allowed to observe the Greek rite; Venetian subjects were lured from the territories of the republic under pretext of going on a pilgrimage to Loreto, but from Loreto they proceeded to Livorno and there became captains or gunners on Medicean ships. Moreover, Genoese, Marseillais and Sicilians were, by one means or another secured for the Duke's service until at last the two first galleys, *La Saetta* and *La Pisana*, were launched<sup>1</sup> and in 1550 undertook their maiden expedition against the Turks at Charles V's request. They were fitted out under the Duke's own eyes, and a third galley, the *San Giovanni*, hoisted the admiral's flag, *La Pisana* and *La Saetta* accompanying her.

And now the little Tuscan contingent began to share in the many disasters and the few successes of war with Turks and renegades. On this first expedition they gained their end, the taking of Aphrodisio (or Mehedia) on the African coast, but thanks to no good generalship or organisation. Even so early in the day, while Cosimo's ships still had their motley feeble crews, D'Oria had a word of commendation for them,

<sup>1</sup> Ranke, *Historisch-biographische Studien*, vols. XL. XLI. of *Sammliche Werke* (1877-8).

saying he would gladly give a few men (pressed as he was for rowers) to the Duke of Florence, for his galleys were the best equipped of any in the fleet. But, for the rest, there were few encouraging features in the undertaking. The joint commanders did not support each other; Andrea D'Oria spent the days playing *tarocco*<sup>1</sup> in his galley or going on land to amuse himself. Don Garzia de Toledo, brave but luckless, was superseded and it was not till after a long and wearisome siege that Aphrodisio was taken, only to be lost a few years later<sup>2</sup>. As for the Italian contingent, bitter complaint was made "that every least Spaniard had the presumption to constrain them to the lowest tasks, they serving as naught save to work in the trenches, to draw the guns, throw up earthworks and such hirelings' work<sup>3</sup>." On the whole, in the face of the dissension that prevailed in fleet and army it is astonishing that anything at all was done.

But Christian prestige was to sink yet lower, and Cosimo's ships had to share in the ignominy of the loss of le Gerbe<sup>4</sup>, an island off the African coast half-way between Tripoli and Tunis. The usual imposing but ill-assorted fleet set sail in 1560 with a Spaniard as usual in command, the Duke of Medina Celi, Viceroy of Sicily. Their object was the recovery of Tripoli, where the Knights of Malta had been established after losing Rhodes, only to be driven out, in revenge for the loss of Aphrodisio, by Dragut, the corsair of the day, successor to Barbarossa. Such insolence could not be disregarded, and Philip II, spurred on by the Knights Hospitallers, gave his consent to the expedition; Genoese, Roman, Maltese, Neapolitan and Sicilian ships were fitted out, with the little Tuscan contingent

<sup>1</sup> A game of cards

<sup>2</sup> A. Guglielmotti, *La Guerra de' Pirati*, vol. II pp. 178, 238, and Manfroni, *op. cit.* pp. 247-9

<sup>3</sup> Guglielmotti, vol. II p. 178. Report of one of Cosimo's agents.

<sup>4</sup> Known to the English as Jerbah.

of three galleys. But from the first all went wrong and when at last in February they touched the island of le Gerbe, Medina Celi had lost heart and Gian Andrea D'Oria was ill. Sickness increased in the fleet; disorder reigned, and, to crown all, came storms which wrecked several galleys. I will omit the intervening events which served but to show the incompetence of Medina Celi and pass on to the last scene of the dismal campaign. Tripoli having been abandoned as too strong for assault, a small garrison was posted in a fortified position on le Gerbe, which had been conquered by the Christians in March. Medina Celi was now taking heart and proposing to return to storm Tripoli. In vain did La Valette, Grand Master of the Knights of Malta, send him urgent messages to warn him that Uluch Ali, the pirate, who had given the Christian fleet the slip, would shortly return with reinforcements from Constantinople. All too late he was made aware of his mistake, for the Turkish sails were seen by a scout. And then, to unwarrantable confidence there succeeded panic fear. One man alone, Scipione D'Oria, proposed to fight; the rest advised retreat, regardless of the garrison they must leave to its fate. Speed and decision, in which alone lay their salvation, were lacking and the expedition ended in a disgraceful and disorderly flight in which hardly a blow was struck and but few ships were saved, some in their haste running aground, others hurriedly surrendering. Among the very first to fly were the three Tuscan galleys, though later a return of courage led them to put about and rescue one which had already been captured by the Turks. The papal commander, Orsini, almost alone had the spirit to fight the enemy and so enable some others to escape, and Medina Celi wished at least to stay on shore and superintend the embarkation of his troops, whom D'Oria was ready to abandon. But this hardly atoned for his earlier negli-

gence, and the honours of war were left with the Spanish handful in the garrison who held out to the last until lack of water, sickness and pestilent air forced them to yield. The sick were killed, the others carried off into slavery, and one more futile campaign marred with cowardice the record of Mediterranean warfare<sup>1</sup>.

All this was poor encouragement to Cosimo, and he began seriously to consider the position. In ten years 1560-71 he had gained little by his new project except a certain support during his Sienese campaign and a certain reputation for having well-equipped galleys. For the rest, they had suffered shipwreck, capture and defeat. Cosimo on studying the question soon came to the conclusion that the contract system was responsible for much of the ill-success of naval warfare. It was clear that a practice which made the captain answerable for every damaged sail, for every rower killed, could lead to nothing on his part but a feverish desire to avoid an engagement. If booty could be won, and a few galleys be made a prize by many, he was prompt enough to engage the enemy, but an equal risk was too serious to face. Indeed, the fact that Venice alone had given up this defective system shows perhaps how little zeal there was among the princes for naval war. But it was characteristic of Cosimo to do well whatever he had in hand. By degrees, aided by Pietro Macchiavelli, he began himself to supervise his fleet and at once some vigour was infused into the undertaking. The Duke, we read, superintended the enrolment of men, signed the captains' papers, wrote with his own hand the instructions for voyages to be made, and in short was amazingly energetic<sup>2</sup>. His

<sup>1</sup> A. Guglielmotti, *op. cit.* vol. II. pp. 370, 382

<sup>2</sup> Manfroni, *Rivista Marittima* (March, 1895), p. 535.

desire to have a strong and independent navy is clearly seen in his remarks to Fedeli:

"I have," he told him, "devoted all my attention to naval matters, and I have galleys ready and some that are now being built, and so I shall continue and shall keep them furnished with all that is needed for their equipment.... And, that I may have all that is wanted for the arsenal in my own States, I have this year given orders that canvas shall be woven for the sails, for else I have all that I need in my own lands and in great abundance, so that whoso will may make use of it<sup>1</sup>."

Otto da Montauto was sent to France to buy slaves, and foreign sailors were urged to enter the service of the Duke. But, what was a good deal more questionable, in his overmastering desire to have his galleys sufficiently manned, the Duke on one occasion thus instructed his captain :

And you are to note that, should it happen that you had made a good prize (whether of a square sail or a lateen sail) ye need not to be too particular, but strive to keep it, judging of the possibility of holding it by taking into account the place, the time and your provisioning, with other matters which 'twere impossible to point out in this our instruction.

In short, the captain was not to enquire too scrupulously whether his prize was a Turkish or a Christian ship, and an enterprise, ostensibly intended to clear the seas of infidel pirates, was to degenerate—failing lawful prey—into a raid on Christians for men and for booty<sup>2</sup>. Contemporaries, as Professor Manfroni justly observes, seem to have been on the whole proud of such acts of piracy, but, fortunately perhaps for Cosimo's future reputation, this expedition ended very disastrously. The captain, obeying orders and not keeping his eyes too wide open, took, besides a Turkish boat, a Cypriote one. But this meant poaching in Venetian waters, for

<sup>1</sup> Manfroni, *loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> *Idem, Rivista Marittima* (April, 1895), p. 75.

Venice undertook to keep the coasts of Crete and Cyprus clear of pirates. Hence when Luxian, the captain, by some blunder anchored his galley, *La Lupa*, off Famagosta to get water, she was recognised; the slaves were taken off to another ship and all the equipment of the galley was sold. Luxian protesting, the Commandant had nothing better to say than: "Water? Aye, you shall have salt water to drink, pack of thieves that you are!"<sup>1</sup> It is easy to imagine Cosimo's fury on learning that his galley was confiscated, his rowers dispersed and his captain made prisoner, but he learnt his lesson and while he lived his fleet henceforth warred only on Turks and pirates. And, his mind running more and more on the most to be made of his ships, he now began to evolve the idea of creating a new order of military knights, not celibate like the Knights Hospitallers, but, like them, vowed to war with the infidels.

Thus, side by side with his desire to see Philip II hampered by the Turks and consequently less attentive to Italian affairs (so much so that the sharp-tongued Lorenzo Priuli accused him of saying he would like a Turkish raid every year) there began to grow a desire which eventually mastered the first. Could he not see himself in possession of a well-disciplined and orderly squadron, to aid Philip against these very Turks; might he not one day become, by the help of his ships, as powerful as D'Oria was at the Spanish Court? Therefore, though we may take as purely formal the words of Pius IV describing him as "a sure and valiant bulwark of the Christian faith," Cosimo's innate love of order and discipline, his real genius for organisation, led him perhaps unconsciously to change his stand-point, and made him range himself as the steady opponent of those Turks whose success he may have once desired. And probably the pride he took in his

<sup>1</sup> Manfroni, *op. cit.* p. 77.

ships began to make it intolerable to him that they should not distinguish themselves. It was never Cosimo's way to encourage idleness or incompetence, and the provisions he made for his new order were wise and enlightened, though, as his material was unpromising, it was not till the days of Ferdinando I that the Knights of S. Stefano gained their finest reputation. They were almost invariably renowned for bravery, and Professor Manfroni, who has studied the annals of the Order at Pisa, can report that "the papal, the Neapolitan, the Sicilian and even the Genoese navies often made use of the Knights in the seventeenth century...and always recognised their courage and capability;...the great majority of them were exemplary in doing their duty, and in this respect did not come short of Cosimo's desires<sup>1</sup>." It was rather in their turbulent and swaggering ways on land that they were a disappointment, nor was it easy to punish them, they being privileged men and often of good family, so that, unless kept in check by a strong hand, they set a bad example. For this, however, the Duke cannot fairly be blamed, and while he was master, close attention was paid to the practice of arms and to navigation so that the Knights of S. Stefano were a sensible support to their comrades as early as in the expedition for the relief of Malta in 1565 and had no unworthy share in the great day of Lepanto. It was a new thing for the admirals commanding to be able to count on even half a dozen sail which would arrive punctually, well-found, well equipped with ammunition and rowers, and with a disciplined body of soldiers; ships moreover whose captains were intended to fight. It was not long before the saying was current at Algiers: Beware of the Galleys of Elba!

Thus Cosimo was not altogether unworthy to share in the glories of Lepanto, when for once the Generalis-

<sup>1</sup> Manfroni, *op. cit.* p. 94.

simo's fighting instincts were allowed to prevail over political and even over mercenary considerations, and Cosimo it was who, in his confidential talk with Pius V in the spring of 1570, urged him to give the help implored by Venice against the Turks, and pointed out how serious would be the loss of Crete and Cyprus. And, remembering the energy with which Cosimo acted as a rule, we may probably credit him with more eagerness for the success of the new League among the Christian powers than was felt by any of its members except Pius V. Cosimo himself, to avoid causing its disruption, had refrained from joining it.

"Cardinal Pacheco has told me," wrote Cardinal Ferdinando from Rome, "that he had heard from a person of authority and one friendly to your Highness, that his Holiness wished to include your Highness, as a powerful prince, in the league which is being discussed...but that, at this conclusion were come to, he knew that the ambassador of the Catholic King would not sign it, he having express orders from his King to do naught which can, directly or indirectly, confirm the titles given to your Highness<sup>1</sup>." (June, 1570.)

It therefore showed a little sacrifice of *amour propre*, a refreshing absence of wearisome and petty punctilio, when Cosimo was not deterred by this from sending his galleys to join in the approaching enterprise though they must sail, not under the Granducal banner, but hoist the blood-red bars on a field argent of Pius V. At least the new knights made a brave show above the banks of rowers in the galleys in their gay dress—a short white silk tunic, trimmed and ornamented with red; on their breast the red cross, to be worn over their corslet of mail. At least, too, they were under the orders of the gallant Marcantonio Colonna, one of the heroes of Lepanto. Their beaked prows breasting the glorious blue waves of the Mediterranean, their gleaming sails swelling in the favouring breeze, which

<sup>1</sup> Manfroni, *Rivista Marittima* (May, 1895), p. 29.

tipped the waves with foam, they were an inspiring sight and, after their arrival at Messina, galleys and crews were conspicuous for their smartness and orderly behaviour. Among them were, one conjectures, Don Giulio de' Medici and those two enigmatic sons of Cosimo, who figure nowhere but in the annals of the Order of S. Stefano. On this memorable occasion the Grand Duke had not even, as was his wont, driven a hard bargain. For as, in place of the 36,000 scudi a year for which he stipulated on giving his ships to swell the papal contingent, he would have to spend no less than 60,000, his last public action can safely be called disinterested. "The Grand Duke," declared Pius V, "in all his dealings with us, hath had no eye to his own advantage, and we too will not forget this<sup>1</sup>."

Cosimo's reward came, no doubt, when a messenger brought word of the long-desired victory, and it was known that resolution and decision had triumphed over vacillation and compromise. Don John of Austria's hot energy had won the day and the battle, desirable for every military reason, had been fought. For once the captains had been forced to lay aside their commercial scruples and strike a blow for fame; the secret instructions of more than one among them for once had had scant attention paid them and the victory of Lepanto was the result.

Yet there was a stain on its glory. Worse than the renewed dissensions between princes, which made Lepanto for all its glamour to so great an extent a barren victory, was the dark suspicion of treachery which rested on Gian Andrea D'Oria and, through him, on Philip of Spain. The Catholic King, it appears, sent him orders to let Uluch Ali, the pirate, slip through his lines, as Philip intended to recognise him as independent King of Algiers, while Uluch Ali on his

<sup>1</sup> Manfroni, *op. cit.* p. 295.

part undertook to forswear his allegiance to the Sultan. Philip, in fact, was greatly hampered by France, and badly in need of peace in his Mediterranean waters and had only reluctantly consented to the battle. But Uluch Ali, contrary to expectation, attacked the Christian ships, and the Genoese commander then hurried up too late, for the pirate set sail and was off westwards before he could be overtaken. Too late also, to save his own good name. "God forgive him," said Pius V, "Gian Andrea hath acted rather as a corsair than as a captain!"

It would almost seem that never a battle in which Italians were engaged could be fought in this century but suspicion of treachery, or at least of some collusion with the enemy, was justified. Thus the great victory afforded another instance of those secret intrigues which lamed the naval enterprise of the day and might well lead the true believers to think lightly of Christianity as exemplified in its nominal supporters. Yet the bravery of the actual heroes of Lepanto—Don John of Austria, Sebastiano Venier, the Venetian, Marcantonio Colonna, the Roman, and of many a humble soldier, had done one good service in discrediting the legend of Turkish invincibility and in breaking the spell of fear which had paralysed their foes. Nor does Cosimo share in the reproach of having recalled his galleys immediately after the battle, thus undoing half the good of their action. On the contrary, his envoy to Don John, sent to congratulate him on the victory, was to urge him, now he had dealt one shrewd blow, not "to leave time to the enemy to refit, but to press him hard and, opportunity serving, take all the places he can, now that he will find no obstacle to so doing<sup>1</sup>." How little such advice was listened to we can judge from Marcantonio's bitter words when Don John, sorely against his will, recalled the fleet to Corfù, to

<sup>1</sup> Manfroni, *op. cit.* p. 296.

Navarino and so back to Italy, their golden opportunity lost: "May God never pardon the man who hath given this counsel."

The battle of Lepanto, theme of so many songs and poems, as lukewarm as the Christianity which inspired them (not even the general hatred of the Turks in Italy supplied a louder note of exultation at their defeat), was the last great event in Cosimo's life. We must attribute his naval successes rather to political than religious ardour, but the victory none the less fittingly set the seal on his well-directed and strenuous efforts to construct an organised fleet to be, after all, an instrument mainly used against the infidel. And, since the motives of men's hearts are inextricably blended, we may very plausibly suppose that Cosimo, with the single-minded Pius, joined with no searchings of conscience in the triumphant Te Deums which echoed down the aisles of Santa Maria del Fiore and under the newly built dome of S. Peter's to celebrate the glorious victory.

When Cosimo left Rome in the spring of 1570 his generous alms-giving, his largesse and ready bestowing of favours in general had made a most 1570-74 pleasing impression on the changeable Romans. And the visit was not without its effect on him, for Pius V had been honest enough to urge him to set an example more worthy of a Christian prince than he had of late. Cosimo knew well enough what this referred to. Eleonora degli Albizzi's day was over, but he now had another mistress, the beautiful Camilla Martelli, and had already legitimised a daughter born to him. This time, perhaps partly following his own inclinations, and perhaps, now that he was growing older, more ready to listen to the Pope's injunctions, he secretly married her. This time too, annoyed though his sons and daughters were, they put a better face on

the matter than might have been expected and were, it may be, not altogether unprepared for such a step. Ferdinando wrote from Rome to Francesco saying that the Pope had told him this had been done by his advice. "So that we," goes on the Cardinal, "had the more reason to take it as well done and to calm ourselves." Ferdinando had answered the Pope, "that, as all the greatness of our house and of us his sons came from the labours of his Highness, we should indeed be ingrates, did we not take in good part and without bitterness what it pleased him to do...<sup>1</sup>." From Florence, Isabella wrote to Ferdinando: "There is great displeasure felt over the matter, but there is no help for it, and it behoves us to mollify rather than inflame such a wound. She is his wife, and he will hold to her, and we, Monsignor mio, are his children and must needs yield to his will... They go out together in a coach... she seems to me of good condition, so that as to that we can be content." She will not, Isabella reminds him, have the rank of Grand Duchess, nor in any way presume on the privileges of her position, and Ferdinando will do best to accept things. "But I know you are wise," she ends, "and will take this from me as from one who adores you<sup>2</sup>." Again she says: "We must e'en digest it as best we can, there being no other remedy. The Signor Principe, like a sensible man, is putting up with it as best he can. The Grand Duke is now at il Poggio with his wife and Don Pietro and Nanni (the little Giovanni)...<sup>3</sup>."

Most incensed of all, however, was the Emperor, who saw in this affair a deadly affront to his already neglected sister to whom he wrote in great haste. She unwisely showed the letter to Cosimo, who replied in one no less indignant. His Majesty had hinted that the Grand

<sup>1</sup> Saltini, *op. cit.* p. 246

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 248.

<sup>3</sup> Reumont, *Beiträge zur italienischen Geschichte*, vol. III. p. 371

Duke was perhaps not in his senses, "and to this," says the angry Cosimo:

"I answer that if need be I will show that I am in my senses.... I give trouble to no one and yet am never left for a day in peace.... I am not the first Prince that hath taken to wife his vassal, and assuredly I shall not be the last. She is a gentlewoman; she is my wife and will continue so. I seek no quarrels, but I will not shun them if they are forced on me in my own house.... I took her," he added, "to quiet my conscience, and of that I have to give an account to our Lord God only and to His Vicar<sup>1</sup>."

Four more years of life were left to Cosimo, but at the last the living death of paralysis overtook him. In these years he sometimes went in the evening to the Medici palace in Via Larga where Isabella Orsini was then living. But more often he had learned men to visit him, or would have such authors read aloud as Plutarch, Caesar or Guicciardini<sup>2</sup>. It was during a banquet in Isabella's house that a very severe apoplectic seizure came on, and again, while overtaxing himself in the preparations for the League of 1571, a second attack left him ill for weeks. From this he only partially recovered, and by degrees lost the use of his limbs, and in the end also the power of speech. The doctors did their best, though their drastic remedies may well have done more harm than good, but work and pleasure had alike exhausted Cosimo's strong frame. The man whose frown had once made all Florence tremble, was now dependent on the good temper of a young woman, who, far from realising how precarious was her position, presumed on her marriage and wheedled money out of her too complaisant husband. She afterwards had cause bitterly to rue her folly, when her protector was gone and her indignant stepson, the Grand Duke, had her fate in his hands and could imprison her in a convent. If it is difficult to feel much pity for a girl who had so

<sup>1</sup> Galluzzi, *op. cit.* vol. III p. 120, and Saltini, *op. cit.* p. 253.

<sup>2</sup> Reumont, *Geschichte Toscana's*, vol. I p. 252.

lightly consented to satisfy the caprice of a man far older than herself, perhaps we should not on the other hand, waste sympathy over the wretchedness of her husband, who suffered from lack of her care and from suspicions of her faithlessness. But one could have desired a better end for Cosimo and this slow extinction of his powers, this pitiful dependence on the whim of a woman who cared nothing for him, are painful illustrations of the hollowness of worldly glory. Antonio Serguidi, Secretary of State to Francesco, sent Bartolommeo Concini minute reports of all that happened. Cosimo had been brought to Florence, that he might have every attention, but Camilla was still remiss in her care of him. One day, writes Serguidi, she had tried to get some favour for a cousin and had been referred by Cosimo to the Prince Francesco. "So that yester evening, being angry, she would not go and feed his Highness as is her wont, for all his Highness asked for her....Enough, it is plain that she seeks to cause him all the annoyances in her power....<sup>1</sup>" One last glimpse of Cosimo shows him making a final effort to throw off his illness. "This morning," writes Serguidi on January 25th, 1573, "he rose at the fourteenth hour, very weak. We could not understand him, nor could he so much as drag his feet—thus he remained until the dinner hour, almost continually dozing in his chair. He dined. Then,...at this point, he was fain to mount into his coach, to go and see the Calcio<sup>2</sup>." No remonstrances could stop him, and thus they went out, in wretched weather for it was drizzling, and Cosimo "remained two hours at a window, almost swooning," to watch the game. On the way home he felt ill, went to bed very weak and there lay in a pitiable state for many months, more or less somnolent.

Not everyone was neglectful in these last years, and

<sup>1</sup> Reumont, *op. cit.* p. 264.

<sup>2</sup> A game not unlike football.

among old servants and favourites, familiar figures in brighter days, we may number Vasari. On hearing of Cosimo's seizure just referred to, he wrote from Rome, as usual to Vincenzo Borghini, Spedalingo of the Innocenti; "I had already heard from Cardinal de Cesis of the Grand Duke's apoplectic fit, and you well say, God help him, and also his Highness<sup>1</sup> who sees the danger,...a grief that is foreseen pains less. Would to God that such a loss as there will be might not be, to such general ruin. Since it pleased God to take away Pius V, let it not please Him to take the Grand Duke also, for 'twould show He desired to take vengeance for our sins." Again a few days later he writes: "I fear and tremble for our Grand Duke, and would to God this evil might not come to us, since to God we must attribute all the good and all the evil that He sends us, all for our sins...." Some months later, Vasari paid a last visit to his Duke. "I have been through all these feast days with the Grand Duke," he tells Borghini, "and he is pleased I should be about him, and though he doth not speak yet he likes to hear of this and that, and hath taken much pleasure in seeing the designs I showed him for the great cupola" (of the Cathedral in Florence)<sup>2</sup>.

So Vasari wrote in the June of 1573, but many months of silence follow while the Grand Duke still lingered on, often mercifully unconscious of his state. At last, on April 20th, 1574, "at the twenty-second hour, greatly revived, he desired to take the Sacraments from the hands of Monsignor Minerbetti, Archbishop of Arezzo, and the following Wednesday, at the nineteenth hour and a half, he died<sup>3</sup>."

On Thursday, April 22nd, at the twenty-fourth hour, writes a contemporary, "the body of the Grand Duke was laid in the great hall of the Palazzo Pitti," clad in the

<sup>1</sup> Francesco.

<sup>2</sup> Gaye, *op. cit.* vol. III. pp. 361, 363, 385.

<sup>3</sup> Saltini, *op. cit.* p. 266.

Granducal robes, "and at the same hour all the bells of the town began to toll and so continued until the third hour. All the shops were closed on Friday the 23rd....Wherever one went, the palace was hung all with black and the black hangings reached all across Piazza dei Pitti<sup>1</sup>."

Such reports of official mourning could easily be multiplied, and Galluzzi assures us that at the Spanish and papal courts in particular the news of Cosimo's death was received with real sorrow, little though this agrees with what we know of Philip II's disposition towards the Grand Duke in these last years. Among such accounts, that of Brantôme has a refreshingly individual note which makes it, notwithstanding its extravagant praise, worth quoting:

"le roy Henry III," he writes, "et la reyne sa mère, lui firent faire de sumptueuses obsèques, et pareil service a Nostre Dame de Paris, comme si ce fust estimé à un roy estranger (j'estoïs lors à la Court) qu'aucuns plaignirent fort et d'autres non; mais pourtant tous égalelement (*sic*) ne se pouvoient garder de le louer a toute extrémité, et le dire un très-grand personnage en toutes façons et qui avoit acquis un grand bien et honneur en sa vie sans y avoir faict aucune faulte<sup>2</sup>."

Yet anyone who cared for Cosimo must have rejoiced that his sad decline was ended, and, from the political point of view, Francesco had for some time been the only person to reckon with in Florence.

For Cosimo's work was done, and Tuscany was reduced from chaos to order, not indeed without the loss of much that was good, nor without the crushing of much that a more generous ruler would have suffered to live. But the task before the youth of eighteen had been great. It is easier to blame him for ruthless severity than to see clearly what would have been the results of a milder government with enemies who would

<sup>1</sup> Cantini, *op. cit.* p. 373.

<sup>2</sup> Brantôme, *Oeuvres* (ed. of 1858), vol. II. p. 37.

have construed mercy as weakness. Cosimo's best vindication is the prosperity and content of Tuscany under the one son worthy to succeed him. During the rule of Ferdinando I those wise provisions of government made by his father bore fruit under the sway of a man who, profiting by the peace ensured by Cosimo's strong hand, was able to relax a strictness no longer necessary. In this, as the last chapter will show, Cosimo had already pointed out the path to follow.

But whether or no few grieved for his loss, Italy was the poorer for his death. With him perished one of the most striking figures in Italian politics for many a long day. Cosimo was not a man of great or fine character, but he was pre-eminently a strong man. And, without exaggeration, it may safely be said, that no such lover of justice had ever before ruled Florence. Traits of greatness like these lead us to wonder what he might have been had his early training, his early associations, brought him in contact with men of fine character and noble ideals. Cosimo began life with no very good disposition, and little in his surroundings was calculated to strengthen his better qualities. What high motives or disinterested actions could fairly be looked for in a youth who only too soon learnt that he must depend on his clever head and strong will to make his way—who, recognised at eighteen as the head of the fairest state in Italy, was exposed to every temptation likely to increase his natural bias to ambition and egoism? It is surely surprising, not that the second Duke of Florence was skilled in all secret dealings, a dangerous enemy hard to outwit, but rather that he was not the monster that slanderous tongues in his own day made him out to be. For Cosimo was a man in whom the good outweighed the evil. And this in spite of the violent temper which now and then obscured his usually clear sense of justice and led to Sforza Almeni's death, in spite of the ambition which induced him at times to

approve measures more profitable to himself than to Florence, in spite of the decline of the last sad ten years. His moral perceptions were, from our point of view, somewhat limited, and what is to us perhaps his most displeasing quality was, as already said, a matter of admiring wonder to his contemporaries, who practised the same art of dissimulation but with less intelligence and success.

All things considered therefore, may we not feel that his name deserves to be remembered, if not with the glow of enthusiasm which is roused by the recital of generous deeds, at least with regret that one who so loved Florence and wished well by her, should chiefly be associated with the downfall of her vaunted liberty? Yet Cosimo in truth saved Florence from a yoke more heavy than that he laid on her—the yoke of the foreigner, and that foreigner the Spaniard. For, said Charles Emmanuel I of Savoy (whose descendants were one day to free Italy from bondage): “of all the forms of servitude, there is none so bitter nor so intolerable as that of the Spaniards<sup>1</sup>.”

Cosimo in truth kept one object steadily before him throughout his life: the glory and advancement of Casa Medici and, through the Medici, that of Florence and Tuscany. He was emphatically no mere *parvenu*, ready to sacrifice the dignity and prosperity of Florence to magnify his own family. He had instead the essential quality of the Florentine statesman, that of so identifying himself with his city that her fortunes must needs be his, and no good come to him but Florence must indirectly share it. In his day, despotic government was so generally acquiesced in, that the Duke undoubtedly considered himself a model ruler when he concentrated power ever more in his own hands. To him it was praiseworthy that his vigilant eyes watched over the least of his subjects and that his retentive

<sup>1</sup> E. Callegari, *Preponderanze Straniere*, p. 156.

memory forgot no trifle once brought to his notice. It was a black day for anyone who had earned the Duke's stinging rebuke of *Smemorato!*

Scarcely an old custom or institution of Florence but was dear to him. He was one of the twelve *procuratori di San Martino*, that charmingly Florentine confraternity founded by Sant' Antonino to give secret help to the *poveri vergognosi*. And no idle member was the Duke, but ever prompt and diligent in attending its meetings and making enquiries. Nor need we forget how he loved the grave old-fashioned Florentine dress, the long red robe, the cap of black velvet. "I would pay a good price," he said, "an I could go about Florence in this garb; 'tis becoming and hath a fine and noble air."

Thus, as the lurid colours fade which once served to paint him, Cosimo appears perhaps a less romantic figure, but surely as one more homely, more dear to a lover of Florence.

## CHAPTER X

### SOME CONSIDERATIONS AS TO HIS CHARACTER AND GOVERNMENT—ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS—CONDITION OF TUSCANY UNDER COSIMO

“COSIMO,” wrote Alfred von Reumont, “found a chaos; he left to his successors a well-ordered state. He shunned neither force nor craft whether to maintain or to increase his power, but he founded this state on a firm basis; strict justice, equality of rights, good finance, an adequate military force on land and sea. He created order and obedience within his territories...he secured a respected, and as far as might be an independent, standing among foreign powers. Modern Tuscany is his work....Let it not be forgotten that it was he who seized the reins at the critical moment when the old estate had fallen to pieces and when the independence of even this part of the peninsula hung in the balance<sup>1</sup>. ” It is also worthy of note that Reumont’s general statements as to his craftiness and violence are never specifically demonstrated. His bloodthirstiness is rather a tradition than a fact, and his severity (no greater than that of his contemporaries) is counterbalanced by a love of justice and equity that is very rare.

I incline to think that the *fuorusciti* were the original cause of much of the talk about Cosimo’s cruelty. They suffered from the stringency of his regulations against them and acted on the principle that, if enough mud is thrown, some of it is sure to stick. For particular instances of cruelty it is not easy to find. No massacre like that of Drogheda can be laid to his charge, nothing even so damaging as that of Glencoe, yet Cromwell is remembered with pride in England, nor even judged

<sup>1</sup> *Geschichte Toscana's*, vol. I. p. 293.

as a man of exceptional cruelty, while William III stands high on the roll of English kings. Cosimo, when his new power was in great danger and at a moment most critical, allowed, it may be, too many of his foes defeated at Montemurlo to be put to death. Yet contemporary opinion, as will be remembered, fully exonerated him, and a recollection of the fierce vengeance taken for the Pazzi conspiracy will show that such severity was not unexampled in Florence. Passions at that time ran very high, and the whole course of Cosimo's life shows that the *fuorusciti* were looked on by him as nothing less than deadly enemies. He expected no mercy from them and, though often he was better than his word, officially at least he gave them no quarter. An early regulation in 1539 ordered that rebels should be put to death if found in his dominions, but whether this edict was ever carried out we do not know, and in view of the instances when a severe law remained a dead letter, may reasonably doubt. Cases reported show in fact that, except in the matter of the prisoners of Montemurlo, Cosimo seldom put to death the exiles who fell into his hands. It is possible that this comparative mildness vanished at the time of the war with Siena, although Segni specifically says that rebels if taken prisoners were for the most part set free. But, whether groundless or not, Piero Strozzi's indignant protests that rebels were not treated like prisoners of war and shortly released, lose some weight if we reflect that the exiles themselves certainly looked for no better usage than they got. The words of a writer by no means favourable to Cosimo show what was the traditional Florentine way of dealing with rebels.

"Among all the cities," he says, speaking of republican Florence, "that proved cruel in the repression of civil revolt or of sedition, none surpassed Florence in passion and ferocity. Even if it be said that none other loved liberty as did Florence, or that none other

was so surrounded by enemies intent on her downfall, yet the fact remains that Florence went beyond all bounds in punishing rebels. I do not think an instance can be quoted of another state in which more heads were cut off or more citizens exiled<sup>1</sup>."

We may say indeed that a more generous ruler would not have kept up such methods, yet the impracticable and intriguing exiles were very unpromising material for kindly treatment. But, by their endless aspersions, they did Cosimo more harm than is realised, and these, added to the desire of adherents of the house of Lorraine to vilify the memory of the first Dukes of Florence, have probably tinged the feelings of modern writers more than they are aware. In spite of so much that has been written to vindicate Cosimo, we still find authors ready to accuse him of stooping to any baseness for the sake of his own ends<sup>2</sup>. It is this persistence of prejudice in the face of confutation which has led me to reiterate, perhaps to a wearisome extent, the fact that Cosimo, far from being a monster, was not even, unless I am mistaken, an exceptionally cruel or vicious man. And it is encouraging to note the considerable change in tone observable in the later writings of Reumont. In a pamphlet on Burlamacchi of the year 1848, he speaks of Cosimo in terms very different from those quoted above, saying among other indictments, that he led his land and his people on the road to ruin, along which they inevitably continued<sup>3</sup>. But, by 1857, closer study of the man and his times had plainly changed the opinion of Tuscany's best modern historian: "Cosimo I," he wrote, "with his marvellous talent for organisation, his firmness of purpose, his keen sight and clear recognition of the tendencies of his time, had created a state whose institutions, if the demands and

<sup>1</sup> C. Gioda, *Gucciardini e le sue opere inedite* (Bologna, 1880), p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> E.g., Cosci, *L' Italia durante le Preponderanze Straniere*; Agostini, *Pietro Carnesecchi*; L Carcereri, *L' Ateneo Veneto*, 1906.

<sup>3</sup> Francesco Burlamacchi, 1848.

conditions of the sixteenth century are fairly taken into consideration, can even now arouse our wonder<sup>1</sup>." And his finally matured opinion, in the passage given at the beginning of this chapter, seems to show a still greater recognition of the abilities of the second Duke of Florence. Cosimo must not be judged without reference to the times in which he lived, and if he is to be condemned for allowing *bravi* to assassinate Lorenzino, then Charles V and Margaret of Parma must share in the condemnation. His proceedings against Piero Strozzi, too, have the excuse—a poor one it may be, but significant of contemporary conditions—that Strozzi himself plotted Cosimo's death. In fact, though stories of poisoning are nowadays often wisely discredited, proofs of conspiracy to murder Cosimo are not wanting and he, like the prudent man he was, no doubt considered himself to be merely exercising his usual caution if he tried to be beforehand with his enemies. It is not a thing to condone, but if the fact makes Cosimo a monster, then more than one of his contemporaries lie under the same accusation. In politics too, Cosimo's support was far more to be reckoned on than that of most princes and his gratitude more constant. But among those who conspired against him was no less a person than the great Cardinal Farnese, although, when driven from Rome in the days of Julius III he had found refuge and hospitality in Florence. This, however, did not deter him from intriguing in 1551 with Cosimo's favourite, Pandolfo Pucci, who for no very adequate reason was plotting against the Duke's life. Pucci was one of the worst characters in Florence and had more than once been in trouble, and it may be that his hot temper, which would not brook even remonstrance, led him to scheme Cosimo's murder. It can easily be believed that, if the Duke had allowed him to escape the worst con-

<sup>1</sup> *Beiträge zur italienischen Geschichte*, vol. v. p. 384 (Berlin, 1857).

sequences of his dissolute conduct, he had not spared him some of his stinging rebukes. But there is also reason to surmise that Pucci had a grudge against Cosimo, and, though it seems an unreasonable one, much brooding on his part may easily have magnified an imaginary slight into serious cause for offence. Pucci, in fact, was persuaded that he had done Cosimo a vastly important service at the time of his election. Pandolfo was son-in-law to Guicciardini who was not at first, so it seems, inclined to give his vote to Cosimo.

"On this Pandolfo Pucci entered the hall and threatened him with death, saying that if he and his two friends, Francesco Vettori and Francesco Valori did not decide in favour of Cosimo 'they would be made to jump from the windows.' On the evening of the election the Duke, in presence of many people, said to Pucci: 'Ask me what you will, for I will never deny you aught.' Words that were forgotten by the ungrateful prince," comments Signor Gioda, "for Pandolfo—and let us pass over the fact that he had committed every kind of evil deed—reminded him of them from the prison whence he came out only to be hanged<sup>1</sup>."

This is quoted as a typical instance of the way in which Cosimo's actions are interpreted. For twenty years during which Pandolfo had been consistently favoured and caressed (not to speak of many offences which had been condoned) may fairly be said to have cancelled Cosimo's obligation for an act which was very improbably disinterested. The limits of his gratitude may surely have been reached when Pucci, having set every sort of bad example to the youths of Florence, ended by plotting to murder its Duke. Cardinal Farnese had not even Pucci's excuse for his conduct, nothing indeed to justify him but the rooted dislike of his family for the successful Duke of Florence. Cosimo, after long and patient unravelling of the

<sup>1</sup> Gioda, *Guicciardini*, p. 364.

intrigue which was only clearly revealed after four years, wrote in a tone of pardonable resentment to Philip II:

Your Majesty must know that Cardinal Farnese was cognisant of this conspiracy. And for all he was in Florence at that time (when I had received him after that he was persecuted and driven away by Pope Julius) yet neither directly nor indirectly did he warn me thereof, though professing himself most friendly (*con fare l' amicissimo mio*). Moreover, know that the head of the conspiracy consulted with Duke Ottavio (brother of the Cardinal)<sup>1</sup> who agreed to let him have some arquebusiers to kill me; and this although I had in hand the reconciling of him (Ottavio) with the Emperor and had, the year before, set free Duke Orazio (a second brother) made prisoner in my State<sup>2</sup>.

Brantôme tells us of yet another plot against Cosimo, in which swords and daggers were fixed in the bed of the Arno so that they might transfix him when he dived into the river as was his wont. But whether this diabolical scheme was really planned or not ("J'ouy faire ce compte dans Florance mesmes," says Brantôme<sup>3</sup>) certain it is that dangers beset Cosimo both without and within. Yet, if the facts are examined, he bears a better record than most princes of his time for keeping true to his alliances and for administering equal justice. Vindictive and cruel as he is said to be, research seems to show that he was more careful of the forms of justice and less given to summary punishment than was at all common in that age. True, his edicts were often severe, and he governed, especially in his earlier years, by terror; his spies were everywhere and when once a man was condemned it was no easy matter to escape from the dreaded prisons. And there were secret dungeons of which even the Venetian ambassadors, accustomed to secrecy and severity, spoke with

<sup>1</sup> Galluzzi tells us that it was Cardinal Alessandro who sent Pucci to Ottavio, vol. II. p. 268.

<sup>2</sup> Litta, *Famiglie Celebri d'Italia* (Farnese).

<sup>3</sup> Brantôme, *Oeuvres*, ed. cit. vol. II p. 33.

bated breath: "God preserve me," ran the saying, "from the secret prisons of the Duke!" But if, it may be said, there was all this mystery and terror, where was the advance? In this; that in a lawless and cruel age the citizens of the Tuscan state were no longer in the same degree as before victims of personal hatred and vindictiveness. The laws were known to them and the penalty; they might well tremble if they fell into the hands of the Duke's criminal judges but it was their own deeds and not the malignity of their enemies that they had to thank for it. They had a chance of proving their innocence, of appealing to the law, since Cosimo I did not favour the methods of Cosimo Pater Patriae who deliberately ruined those opposed to him. "For the law-abiding citizen," writes Mr Armstrong, "justice had never been so even<sup>1</sup>." This it must be conceded is no slight praise, and Cosimo so closely identified himself with the new regulations for governing his state that it may not be out of place to give a very general and summary account of the main features of the new system.

The seeds of absolutism had been sown before Cosimo's election in the plan drawn up for the reform of the government in 1532, thanks to which (as mentioned in an early chapter) Cosimo had little difficulty in freeing himself from constitutional restraints. I propose to set aside the abstract question of the inherent defects of absolute rule, as being more or less an anachronism in Italian history of the sixteenth century, attempting merely to give some idea of Cosimo's own conception of the duties of a governor and of the way in which he put his theories into practice.

Cosimo on his accession had a task before him which might well have dismayed him had not the buoyancy of youth and the confidence born of ability upheld

<sup>1</sup> Cambridge Modern History, vol. III. p. 389.

him. He came to power before the pacifying tendencies of Alessandro's early days had begun to be felt, and when the brutal murder of the first ruler under the new régime had again disconcerted and almost convulsed men's minds; when party passions and resentments, ill-suppressed under a prince who was daily losing what his promising beginning had gained, were ready to flame out with a hotter fire. I have related Cosimo's dealings with the exiles and shown how peace was restored to Tuscany. It is now time to turn to the internal government of the state, largely remodelled by the Duke and imbued with a spirit of thoroughness and efficiency very new to it. Cosimo's theory of a prince's duty was that he should have the threads of every matter in his own hands, and a burden of work was thrown on him which only his extraordinary industry and marvellous memory enabled him to bear. It was obvious that such a system must fail when a weaker personality succeeded to his. Yet it may well be that nothing else could have given such impetus to the reformation of government consequent on the change from a republic to a principality, and that Cosimo's vigour alone could have made a comparatively homogeneous state out of the disparate elements he found to his hand. His aims were briefly: to make his authority obeyed promptly and without question throughout his boundaries; to put an end as far as possible to intra-communal disputes and bickerings; to protect the weak against the strong; to repress private litigation and ruinous lawsuits; to restore peace and prosperity to Tuscany by reviving her commerce and her credit, as well as by draining marshes and improving the cultivation of land. His administrative and economic methods are in many cases nowadays judged mistaken, but this need not deprive him of the praise due to him for his efforts. Much of his taxation indeed was excessive. Yet in his day it was not so

much mistaken ideas for which he was blamed, since these were shared by his contemporaries, and even taxation was grumbly acquiesced in as inevitable. What weighed, heavy as lead, on the Florentines was the unwelcome but growing conviction that the *principato* had put an end to faction, to the turbulence and change which had been the breath of life to the citizens. Justice as we understand it had never been the aim of the Florentine republic, and therefore we may add, the republic was doomed to fall. Florentine government was essentially party government carried to its extreme lengths, dominated up to the end by "the blindly intransigent and exclusive spirit of mediaeval factions<sup>1</sup>." The citizens now found themselves all bound to obey the law, all equally abject (so they felt) before the ducal tribunal. But the poor, hitherto seldom considered in Florence unless when inconveniently strong, an object of dread and hatred to the aristocratic party, had found a protector. From end to end of the Florentine state one strong hand was felt, and, if a new terror arose to evil-doers, the men of peace by degrees enjoyed a new and welcome security.

We will then turn to a brief consideration of the new regulations which brought about so great a change<sup>2</sup>. The way was paved for Cosimo by the reforms of 1532 which only needed a skilful hand to make them a useful instrument of his individual power. By these new decrees, the Signoria was abolished and with it the Gonfaloniere of Justice, and in their place was set up the Magistrato Supremo. This consisted of the Duke's lieutenant, chosen by him, and four councillors. The councillors were elected by the Senate of Forty-eight (the Quarantotto) out of their own body, the Forty-eight being themselves in turn elected by the Council of

<sup>1</sup> A. Rossi, *Guicciardini e il Governo Fiorentino*, vol II p. 124.

<sup>2</sup> What follows is mainly taken from the detailed study of the matter published by Signor Anzilotti.

Two Hundred. But neither of these assemblies could act except in the presence of the Duke or of his delegate. He had, further, the power to nominate the members of the two councils at his pleasure and to substitute whom he pleased in the place of the four councillors, should they be unable to assist at the sessions of the Magistrato Supremo owing to illness, absence or other reasons. Thus their office of restraining him was little more than nominal. The anger and disgust of the members may easily be imagined and may well have barbed some arrows of invective against Cosimo. For, mindful of old traditions, the Councillors being attached to the party in the ascendant, looked to see their faction triumphant and their ambitions satisfied, and it was bitter to find themselves instead robbed of all real authority. Yet many old names and old magistracies continued, altered as they were. The Senate was now little more than a machine for registering laws and decrees, and for electing members of the Magistrato Supremo who formed the executive of the state, an executive, however, controlled by one supreme authority and serving chiefly as the Duke's mouthpiece. With him lay the real activity of the government, and edicts, as time went on, came to be issued first without the sanction of the Forty-eight and then by the mere authority of the Duke, whose rescripts in the end had the force of law. This, however, only occurred in special cases. In the gradual evolution of the new system, the Magistrato Supremo, consisting as it did of few members who were changed every three months, served as an organ well adapted for the speedy dispatch of the less important legislation. The Senate, which it was the Duke's prerogative to convoke, was summoned to vote laws of a more general order, which he desired should receive this solemn sanction<sup>1</sup>. As

<sup>1</sup> A. Anzilotti, *La Costituzione interna dello Stato Fiorentino sotto il Duca Cosimo I de' Medici* (Firenze, 1910), p. 34.

for the Council of Two Hundred, it had but minor duties to fulfil; among others that of voting in a restricted and complicated way (not without ducal supervision) on the election of members to the many magistracies and to the Senate. In short, as far as the old conditions were concerned, Vincenzo Fedeli's words were true enough:

"But to this picture," he says, having spoken of the fairness of Tuscany, "there is a reverse side both dark and gloomy, if we consider how many most rich and noble families numbering so many honoured men wont to live in freedom and govern so fair a state... now see themselves dominated and ruled by one man, and him a fellow citizen, become servants who once were free men, so that, only to look at them, the oppression of their spirit is clearly seen."

Yet, adds the Venetian, the Florentines themselves admit that this has come about by the judgment of God "who would no longer tolerate in this city the injustice and the tyranny which they used cruelly towards the people, towards the mob, towards their subjects, towards the poor folk of the countryside, who saw themselves in the hands not of one, but of many hateful tyrants<sup>1</sup>."

Herein then lies Cosimo's merit, that he protected the helpless, as will be seen on turning to his work of reconstruction. It must be borne in mind that, so long as Cosimo was Duke, his intense vigilance served as an effectual check to any usurpation of authority by his subordinates. An interesting example of this occurs in the matter of ducal rescripts, which were "fully valid as law." But, as they might have become a dangerous instrument in the hands of others, the Duke carefully guarded against their abuse. They thus could have no force if opposed to the laws and statutes of the *dominio*, unless they contained a special clause to that effect, and, as they related only to special instances, they could not be cited in ordinary cases. That this was

<sup>1</sup> Albèri, *op. cit.* vol. I serie ii. (Firenze, 1839), p. 327. See also Albèri's own comment on the justice of Fedeli's remarks as to the treatment of subject towns and of the poorer classes.

Cosimo's direct intention is shown, as has been pointed out<sup>1</sup> by his own words. The Duke observes that his ministers have the power to make a law out of a single word of his rescripts, thereby causing great abuses and disorders, and, as Cosimo forcibly puts it: "perverting justice and crucifying the poor." He therefore enacts that "the rescripts cannot be alleged, nor used, nor be valid more than the one time...it being inadmissible that a magistrate should make a law out of an award or out of a letter, but only out of those edicts that issue from the Councillors, our rescripts having the precedence (precedenti prima li nostri rescritti)." By this means, adds the Duke, "we shall avoid much idle talk that there is, which, six times out of six, makes out we have said what we never thought of, which distorts the rescripts and does much injustice, with a thousand rascally and knavish tricks<sup>2</sup>."

Thus, says Signor Anzilotti, "Cosimo desires to remedy one of the defects of absolutism by safeguarding the deliberative action vested in him alone...from the danger of being abused (*viziata*), distorted, or ill-applied by the officials and magistrates of the State<sup>3</sup>."

A further limitation of the above decision excepted from this order those rescripts granted to individual suppliants and in certain other cases. Cosimo, commenting on a paper from his secretary which defined the new judgment, observed with his authentic imperious touch:

You know not why these folk are so full of hesitation? Because, in this way many offices will be cleared away, and the ground will be cut under the feet of many pettifogging doctors and notaries; and they are causing every imaginable confusion, to see if it be possible to repeal it. But they have not learnt that our head does not wag at their bidding.

<sup>1</sup> Anzilotti, *op. cit.* p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>3</sup> *Idem.*

Thus Cosimo concisely affirmed the real aim of the law, which was to enforce the precise application of the acts which emanated from him as from the single source of right<sup>1</sup>.

With this one controlling power guiding the minutest action of his ministers, there came a surprising growth of homogeneity in the government of the state:

No longer is there a ruling city which holds the communes and subject towns bound closely to it for its sole advantage, but there is a centralising government which, so to say, hinges on the person of the prince, whose influence and vigorous guardianship is felt throughout the State.

Certainly, as Reumont observes, if Cosimo was an autocrat, he never grudged any of the trouble entailed by ruling, and, writing in after years to the members of the Magistrato Supremo, the Duke could safely say:

We will make provision for public and private needs with that zeal, the effects of which are known to you during the many years that we have governed...for we protest to you, that in all things and for all men in public and in private, we are ready to endure every sort of fatigue<sup>2</sup>.

To his ministers and secretaries he was ever the vigilant overseer, and no one was allowed to overstep his functions or to come between the Duke and his poor and helpless subjects. Great part of his legislation was directed to the improving of legal procedure so as to enable his subjects to plead their cause without any distinction of class. Special provisions were made to secure the rights of widows and of the poor, certain exemption from dues being granted. Moreover, the great care exercised in choosing judges and magistrates by degrees raised the whole tone of the administration of justice.

The final appeal was always to the Duke and the Court of arbitration, the Magistrato Supremo. The

<sup>1</sup> Anzilotti, *op. cit.* p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 94.

Duke's auditor, *ex officio* a member of this council, acted as intermediary between Duke and Council, informing his master of the appeals made, with all their details, and countersigning the ducal rescripts, which then received the assent of the Magistrato Supremo. And these appeals were, more often than not, cases of litigation between kinsmen. The Magistrato Supremo was specially organised "to remove all occasion and seed of dispute that may arise in the future," by reconciling contending parties and inducing them to agree to arbitration and compromise, by which means lawsuits were avoided. But this court also acted more or less as guardian of the poor and helpless, as when a suppliant begged of the Duke that he would ask the Magistrato Supremo to provide a dowry for two girls neglected by their father. "Let them," ran the petition, "be given convenient time in which to be married, and if he (the father) does it not, let it be made known to your Excellency, who will attend thereto." Again, we see its decrees "depriving a guardian of his office as unworthy, or exonerating one who could not fulfil the trust and committing the care of the wards to officials who had the charge of watching over them and championing their interests<sup>1</sup>." The Magistrato Supremo further, looked to the needs of the dumb, the infirm, the insane, and had an eye to ill-used children, to idiots and to those "who invoked the supreme power *causa perhorrescentiae* against powerful enemies<sup>2</sup>." By this means therefore, the weak, the poor, those who were inevitably the losers in ordinary courts where proceedings could be dragged on to their ruin, found a strong protector in the Duke. He, with the help of his innermost circle of ministers and secretaries, could decide on their cases, following the advice of expert jurists.

We will therefore devote a little space to the new

<sup>1</sup> Anzilotti, *op. cit.* pp. 98, 99.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 100.

institution of the Auditors and the *Pratica Segreta*, although we need not go into all the details of the new administration. Under the *principato*, side by side with old institutions such as the Cinque del Contado and the Otto di Pratica, new bodies, like the Nove Conservatori della Giurisdizione, etc., found a place. These tended by degrees to supersede the older magistracies, always with the aim of substituting order for confusion, of checking waste whether of time or money, of instituting one unvarying model of justice throughout the state. And among the best and most effectual instruments in this great work of re-organisation were the Auditors, an institution unknown in the days of the Republic. The Auditore della Giurisdizione, the Auditore Fiscale and the Auditore delle Riformagioni (each of them associated with a different branch of the government) were practically the Duke's confidential ministers, his expert advisers, and much of the improvement in administration was due to his wise choice of subordinates<sup>1</sup>. Lelio Torelli, Francesco Vinta, Francesco Campana, Angiolo Niccolini and Jacopo Polverini all contributed to form a real tradition of jurisprudence in Tuscany, founded on the reports of the Auditors who had the confidence of the prince. By their means those who chose the special remedy

<sup>1</sup> The duties of the Auditore Fiscale are briefly described in the text. The Auditore della Giurisdizione was specially connected with ecclesiastical matters, involving the care of Florentine interests against papal encroachments. The Auditore delle Riformagioni was a later institution, a sort of *dédoublement* of the Fiscal auditor. He became the confidential representative of the Duke in the Magistrato Supremo, in cases of common law, leaving to the Fiscal auditor (who properly speaking had cognisance of these cases) this office only in his financial capacity. The word *Riformagioni* originally referred to the archives, where the public acts of the Commune were registered, over which presided a chancellor, called Cancelliere della Signoria. The Auditore delle Riformagioni was, *mutatis mutandis*, his successor. The cancelliere, that is, became the Duke's trusted minister, who laid the new regulations before the Magistrato Supremo and not seldom had a hand in framing laws. The cancelliere of old presided over councils, etc., in something the same way as the auditor.

of supplication could be assured that their cases would be carefully examined into and disposed of with most unusual despatch<sup>1</sup>. The Auditors were, so to say, an extension of the Magistrato Supremo, in so far as their duties did not tie them to Florence but enjoined on them to learn and to report on the condition of the Duke's subjects throughout the state. On the one hand they were to smoothe out and simplify local difficulties and in general to quicken legal proceedings; on the other to act as executors of the Duke's wishes in individual cases decided by his rescripts. Lelio Torelli in particular was a great peacemaker. To him as well as to his master petitioners often had recourse as a third arbitrator, while the Duke in turn often left him to decide on the just compromise:

"Do you see," he writes to him, "whether you can bring these gently and skilfully to agreement, so as to avoid a lawsuit. Since we desire that each should enjoy his own, it seems to us that you should strive, with that skill which you know how to use, to bring them to agreement; and if this have no result, you will let justice take its due course, that by this example all may see how much we have it at heart."

And again, lest we might think Torelli had things too much his own way, Cosimo reproaches him for not having despatched a case more quickly:

This gives us cause, first of all, to think that you esteem our honour but little, since that consisteth in doing equal justice; and 'tis moreover grave cause of blame to you, since all will say that, because it is a matter concerning our major-domo, you do not despatch it but instead go about it tardily in doing justice to whoso is in the right.... And remember, in matters that touch our servants, to despatch them henceforth more speedily... doing justice to whoso is in the right without delay; for thus we command and freely desire<sup>2</sup>.

In short, Torelli must not forget that, as Cosimo wrote to Bernardo Carnesecchi, "our proposals are orders."

<sup>1</sup> Anzilotti, *op. cit.* p. 128.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 126.

So much for the Primo Auditore, who was also chief secretary and sometimes had in addition to take the office of Auditore delle Riformagioni. Even more powerful than he was the Auditore Fiscale, who, besides his duties of superintending financial operations, was supreme criminal magistrate and guardian both of the Duke's interests and of those of the poor. How easily such an official might become odious to the rebels and exiles is so obvious as hardly to need comment. He had control over confiscated estates, and, as if this were not enough to make him detested, gradually superseded the old criminal magistracy of the Otto di Guardia e Balia. He thus was the chief criminal minister in cases where "the resolutions of the Otto had not satisfied the Duke, or where the gravity of the crime called for the energetic procedure of an expert<sup>1</sup>." That was moreover a time when justice was seldom tempered with mercy, and even among his fellow-citizens and fellow-subjects the Fiscal Auditor was not likely to be popular, so extended were his powers of inspection and surveillance. The lynx-eyed master too, to whom his reports were sent, was never lenient to any lax performance of duty. Certain subordinate magistrates having been negligent, Quistelli, the Fiscal Auditor, reproached them for their carelessness, so that some of them "were fain to blush." Cosimo, replying to this information, drily commented: "In truth, shame should have led them to treat justice differently, but wherein they lack do you make good, that the poor do not suffer." And more severely he writes on a second reference to their remissness: "If they do not their office we shall do them little honour, since we will not that justice should suffer through this<sup>2</sup>."

Did his ministers show signs of annoyance when things were reported directly to him without their intervention, they were quickly made to realise that,

<sup>1</sup> Anzilotti, *op. cit.* p. 144.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 147.

if he consulted them, he was yet free to act without them:

"Let it not displease you," he exhorts Quistelli, "that the officials make things known to their master, for we desire that all should be able to tell us freely what seems good to them, nor doth this in any way discredit you, because you, as your office demands of you, strive to learn things; wherefore that we also should know them ought to be grateful to you and nowise vexatious."

More emphatically he repeats:

Messer Alfonso, let it not annoy you that the officials are cautious and desire at times to learn the opinion of their masters; for, after all, 'tis we who are the master, and we intend that all should say and do as they please in asking us (aye and more than once), what they have to do. Leave then these trifles and attend to our service, for we are a man to know and to recognise whoso serves us well or ill<sup>1</sup>.

It would be pleasant to quote other instances given by Signor Anzilotti tending to show Cosimo's uniform wish to govern with justice, which led him to interpret contentious laws in the light of a more equitable judgment, and to guard above all against the abuse of power to the disadvantage of the helpless. It is probable that he was moved more by his love of order and his hatred for waste and confusion than by humane motives, yet the love of justice was in truth a ruling feature of his character. But we must pass on to the last innovation made by the Duke in the constitution of Florence, which was the formation (at a rather uncertain date) of the Pratica Segreta.

Signor Anzilotti shows it to be a mistake to state that the Consiglio Segreto, formed at the time of Cosimo's election, was later transformed into the Pratica Segreta, since the members of the one are sometimes referred to as being members also of the other. He explains that the Pratica Segreta was, as shown by its name, at first merely an informal meeting of the Duke's ministers

<sup>1</sup> Anzilotti, *op. cit.* p. 151.

and confidential councillors, to whom, as occasion arose, were added representatives of various magistracies. For, to meet together *a pratica* means simply to assemble for discussion. Thus, far from being, under another name, the little body of the aristocratic faction once intended to restrain Cosimo, the Pratica Segreta was a new and efficient instrument in the hands of the Duke. Its members were men well versed in their various professions and the names of Cosimo's most trusted advisers are found on its rolls. In it there sat, besides, various of the ordinary magistrates, and the whole formed a consultative body well adapted to re-organise the chaotic condition of state affairs. It shows, too, the new principle on which Cosimo governed, for though Averardo Serristori and Angiolo Niccolini were Florentines, the greater number of secretaries and auditors belonged to other parts. Francesco Campana came from the Val d' Elsa, Lelio Torelli from Fano, Francesco Vinta from Volterra. The days had come to an end when the Florentines had a monopoly of all good things, and bitter must have been their awakening to this reality.

But the whole state of Tuscany had reason to rejoice in the change. The inevitable end of Italian republics, founded as they were on no firm basis of liberty but on the shifting sands of faction, was to fall under a tyrant, and Florence, saved from a foreign viceroy, might well be thankful for the lot reserved for her. Criminal legislation was still barbarously severe, and by its very excess of rigour (as in the case of the Legge Polverina) defeated its own ends. Many new laws were severe and repressive and the hateful system of espionage, brought to great perfection by Cosimo, was productive of little good; yet at least there was peace which weighed heavy in the balance against taxation and other vexations. There was, too, a real attempt on the part of the Florentine duke to revive the glory

and prosperity of Tuscany. Throughout the state there was a tightening of discipline and an increase of efficiency which could not but be peculiarly salutary after the relaxing of ordinary bonds of government during the last troubled years of the Republic.

And, as these remarks on the new régime began by a quotation from Reumont, so they may also conclude with his words:

"One great advantage of the new rule," he wrote, "was the prompt execution of justice. The judges dreaded Cosimo as much as did the guilty.... He was kindly to those in need.... His acuteness was equalled by his activity; his firmness of resolve by his foresight in carrying out his designs, his appreciation of the means available, his power of waiting patiently, his impenetrability up to the decisive moment, and lastly by his unfailing memory which enabled him never to lose the thread even of the smallest details. He was taciturn, sphinx-like, reflective. He knew his land and his people<sup>1</sup>."

Cosimo from the point of view of modern economics made grave mistakes, and, far from lastingly improving the commerce of Tuscany, inevitably on the decline, he on the whole enriched himself and his family more than the state. It might plausibly be said that by his riches and the use he made of them he raised the power and prestige of his dukedom and so indirectly benefited his subjects, and there can be no doubt that it was his intention also to revive the languishing trade of Florence and that it was ignorance of the best means to gain his end which thwarted his efforts. At best perhaps they would not have been highly successful under the changed conditions in Italy. Her position in the commercial world was greatly altered since Spain and Portugal had become such formidable rivals, making the Atlantic, not the Mediterranean, the highway of trade.

To take the question of taxation first. This, until Cosimo's later years, was very heavy, but as the

<sup>1</sup> *Geschichte Toscana's*, vol. i. p. 255.

pressure of war relaxed, so did the burdens on the Tuscans. Nor was it only wars that drained the treasury. Misery and famine also called for help, and how profoundly wretched were the conditions in the early days of Cosimo's rule it is hard for us to picture. Scarcity and high prices soon caused starvation and utter destitution; agriculture had never been very popular in Tuscany and so little was the land cultivated even round the chief town that, in 1550, only seven miles from Florence wolves made havoc among the shepherds and had to be hunted down. Sickness often followed in the wake of famine and, if nothing else harassed the peasants and poor folk, torrential rains periodically flooded the country, breaking down river banks, sweeping away bridges and mills, drowning horses and cattle. Often Florence itself was alarmed by the rising floods of tawny water which poured into the houses near the Arno and left behind them a thick evil-smelling deposit. The Duke would be among those who went about in boats to bring food or a means of escape to those cut off by the swollen river. In the country, bands of soldiers were a common enough sight until the peace of Cateau-Cambrésis gave Italy much-needed quiet, and, whether they were friends or foes, their presence seldom conduced to comfort. The years of the Sienese war, too, were a black time for Tuscany.

Cosimo early resolved that his granaries should be full and his treasury equal to the steady drain upon it. The improving of agriculture was essential and to this he devoted immense care, though the results were not always in proportion to it. But, in the meantime, corn must be had from elsewhere, Holland and Belgium providing the most. If wine and oil also failed, Corsica, Crete and the islands of the Archipelago had to send supplies. For the wool trade, oil was to be had nearer at home, but only at a high price, coming from Perugia,

Genoa, Apulia and Provence<sup>1</sup>. In the scarcity of 1550, bread was distributed to the poor for five months, the people gathering at the sound of a bell in Florence and other towns of Tuscany. Many children in these sad days were deserted by their parents who could not feed them and sheltered by charitable people or taken into the foundling hospitals<sup>2</sup>.

There were therefore many calls on the treasury and much money was needed, which Cosimo, alone of his contemporaries, was successful in raising. His good fortune was largely due, no doubt, to the rich sources he had to draw on, as master of what had always been, next to Venice, the most flourishing state of Italy. For, so fertile was Tuscany that the saying went "that the *maremme* of Siena, the plain of Pisa, the district of Arezzo and the valley of the Arno could supply all Italy with food<sup>3</sup>." But Cosimo had also himself to thank for his riches. He instituted two principles in his taxation which, if not new, at least had not been commonly applied under the Florentine Republic. He made property, not politics, the basis of its assessment and attended with scrupulous care to the tiresome and petty details of the collection of dues. There was no corrupting of officials under his rule, no exemption by favour from customs tolls. Bitterly did the Venetian ambassador, Lorenzo Priuli, complain of his treatment at the *octroi*. Among his effects were found a "few couple of fowl and some game, together with two barrels of Malvoisie." Thereupon his goods were detained for three days, and the officials at the end of this time "used so much courtesy" towards him as to charge him little less than the ordinary fee. "Such small respect to ambassadors," fumed Priuli, "not being used even by the Turks,"—with whom, indeed, a bribe

<sup>1</sup> Galluzzi, *op. cit.* vol. II. p. 247

<sup>2</sup> Adriani, *op. cit.* vol. III. p. 100.

<sup>3</sup> Albèri, *Relazione di V. Fedeli*, vol. I. serie II. p. 339.

was likely to have an excellent effect. His chests too were opened, and no redress for all this was to be had from Cosimo, though this was probably mistaken policy towards a none too friendly state<sup>1</sup>. But the Duke was bent on showing himself rigid, and his brother-in-law, Don Luis de Toledo, was not allowed to leave Florence without discharging a heavy debt, to pay which he had to sell his garden behind the Annunziata<sup>2</sup>.

This, then, was the other secret of Cosimo's wealth. He demanded obedience to the law from all; he saw that his minutest orders were inflexibly carried out, and he was himself most punctual in fulfilling his obligations. Forced loans were no new thing and the Florentine Republic had almost surpassed itself in the invention of vexatiously minute taxation. But Cosimo, when he mulcted and even fleeced his rich subjects, never failed to pay good interest on the loans he demanded and proved that the capital they had given him was secure. Again, having at a critical time suspended the salaries of state officials, he was careful, as soon as it was practicable, to pay up all arrears. Merchants found him a safe man to do business with, and this materially aided him to raise money on occasion, while it was all for the good of Tuscany that her credit stood so high. Much of the money amassed was used for political ends, whether as loans or subsidies, or frankly as bribes. Much, too, was spent on furthering schemes of improvement at home, as will shortly appear. But Cosimo is not to be looked on as an entirely model prince and was a less generous and benevolent master than his son Ferdinando. It is therefore to be feared that all his regulations for increasing his revenues to the utmost were not dictated by his wish to distribute such wealth among his people in the form of food, of

<sup>1</sup> Albèri *op. cit.* vol. II. serie II. p. 73-1

<sup>2</sup> Melhini, *Ricordi*, etc., p. 30.

improved sanitary surroundings, or even of public buildings. He did a great deal in that way it is true, but we must not overlook Priuli's observation that the people were much harassed by a new order which forbade them to buy corn except from the Duke. The Duke then fixed his own price, and exercised the same right over oil and wine, so that such necessaries cost more in Florence than in the towns of the Venetian Republic. It must indeed be realised that the importance of keeping stores of food against a famine or against the contingency of war was very great and may have led to an unnatural increase in prices, nor would Priuli fail to represent Cosimo in the worst light. His predecessor, Fedeli, describes a more satisfactory state of things. Lest the enemy, he said, should profit by the stores of corn, the peasants as soon as harvest was over, brought the provision of corn and wine and oil to the towns and strong places whence they were supplied as they needed without any extra expense. Mellini, too, gives us a glimpse of the Duke intensely angry with his Provveditore who was congratulating himself that he had made a profit on the purchase of some corn for the benefit of the ducal treasury. Cosimo on this "turned to him in great wrath, and burning with anger, said some very ugly words to him; adding that he had no wish to make a profit out of his children and that he (the Provveditore) had best get out of his sight and never speak so again or he would have him hanged<sup>1</sup>."

But the fact remains that the Duke competed with his subjects in trade, and that his greater command of capital gave him an unfair advantage. Thus, while he had every wish to improve the commercial state of Tuscany, the means he took to do so were often rather of private than of public benefit. That is to say, it was into his coffers that the wealth flowed. Yet let it be

<sup>1</sup> Mellini, *Ricordi*, p. 14.

remembered that Cosimo's taxation deliberately weighed heavier on the rich than on the poor, and that very much of the money he amassed was in fact spent on the public service, for we need not reproach him (as does Bernardo Segni) for money wasted on fortifications and water conduits, nor even perhaps for that which went to buy jewels and other rarities. Segni, alone of writers, accuses the Duke of squandering money on gaming, since it is usually the Duchess who is blamed for so doing<sup>1</sup>. But no doubt the revenues had to make good the loss in either case. More serious is Cantini's charge that, at a time when the exchequer was low and taxes very heavy, Cosimo spent large sums in walling in the great wood called the Pineta and over making a large park round Poggio a Caiano.

We may reasonably doubt, however, take it all in all, whether we should hear so much of the severity of taxation were it not that its most stringent provisions hit the very class accustomed to be dominant in Florence. It was the rich merchants, whose parks and gardens and villas made the country a delight "round about the plain of Florence towards Pistoia and Pisa" who now so bitterly complained. Indeed, the forced loans and various taxes imposed at different times diminished their trading resources and undeniably affected the commercial prosperity of Tuscany. In all this Cantini sees the political end in view of keeping down the richer and more turbulent citizens, or we may say, as Priuli puts it, "this Duke, being a new prince (not to say a tyrant) of necessity abhors and hates this most holy name of liberty." That Cosimo desired the Florentines to feel him their master there is no doubt, and yet his efforts to promote the well-being of Tuscany were so far-reaching, so constant and so varied that it

<sup>1</sup> Fedeli, *Relaz. cit.* p. 353 "La Duchessa... sempre gioca per sua ricreazione ma vuol vincere sempre, e gioca di migliaia; e il Duca medesimamente gioca, ma raramente."

may be questioned whether he intended to ruin any branch of her trade. Vexatious tolls and dues such as those of which Priuli complains were a commonplace of commercial life in Italy and other countries long after the sixteenth century.

The agriculture which was commonly despised by the Florentines was a special object of Cosimo's attention, and the good which he did to all the state and especially to the city of Pisa and its territory is incalculable. "He dried up swamps, changed the course of rivers and embanked them, he drained the land by the help of dykes, and having done away with the unhealthiness of the district, brought thither new inhabitants to cultivate the land and carry on trade<sup>1</sup>." The fostering care which he showed for every part of his states gradually spread a sense of security throughout Tuscany, and, when the war with Siena was over, the Duke could move more freely about his lands, conscious that he was less unpopular with his other subjects than with the Florentines—whom indeed he ruled with a heavier hand than was felt elsewhere. For the city of Siena itself, as already mentioned, much careful provision had been made tending to heal old discords and soothe the bitterness of subjection, and the citizens were by degrees acquiescing in the new conditions.

But, while the city thus revived and began to live its life again, the countryside, depopulated, and wasted as it had been by the cruel war, remained a serious problem to Cosimo. Agriculture, which he had in many cases promoted with success, was in a sickly state on his southern borders. The Duke made a grave mistake in allowing the land of the Maremma to be contracted for, instead of selling it to the people already established there. The consequence of this was that the lands were taken over by inexperienced farmers, who let part of their arable land go out of

<sup>1</sup> Galluzzi, *op. cit.* vol. III. p. 192.

cultivation for lack of skill to manage it. Hampering regulations which forbade the export of corn except in good years also reacted unfavourably, and, in spite of the free trade now instituted between Florence and Siena, traditional jealousy and rivalry were stumbling-blocks to any immediate revival of prosperity. Galluzzi speaks, too, of the harsh exaction of taxes, which would weigh heavily on districts already impoverished and seems to point to a severity unusual in the Duke's dealings with his Sienese subjects.

In other parts, however, trade increased surprisingly, even if the improvement were, to some extent, more apparent than real: and this greatly because Cosimo's passion for having things in his own hands unduly influenced the normal conditions of commerce, too often creating a monopoly. Ranke complains in particular that, "though the Duke improved agriculture, he then treated the products of the earth as he did his other commercial assets<sup>1</sup>." In fact, when he had provided against the contingencies of famine and raids of the enemy by keeping a goodly supply of corn in the various fortified places, Cosimo then looked on the remainder as his own property and traded in it—at a high price if Priuli is correct.

The merchants, however, had less cause to complain than the agriculturalists. For, though Fedeli talks of many burdens and tolls and says disgustedly that the Duke pays too much attention to petty details, there were also many exemptions from taxes and exactions in favour of traders. Thus the wool industry began to revive greatly, supplying France, Spain and the Netherlands; in 1556 Philip II granted the free import of Florentine serges into Spain; Florentine merchants began to send their ships to all parts; Florentines settled in Brazil, Macao and China. Working in coral began at Pisa, whither Cosimo brought artisans from

<sup>1</sup> *Historisch-biographische Studien*, p. 437.

Sicily; fine glass was made by men secretly enticed from Venice. In fine, the benefits of peace and the growing security, due to Cosimo's punctual discharge of his obligations, contributed to the renewal of prosperity natural to Tuscany. With this went the better organisation of justice and the more equitable basis of taxation, while husbandry found a quick return in the fertile soil of Tuscany and among its keen-witted inhabitants. Although, then, Florence felt herself oppressed under Cosimo (only in his later days discovering that he could be clement no less than austere) the Duchy as a whole had reason to rejoice in the substitution of a Duke for a Republic. And this should weigh heavy in the balance against his severity (less noticeable after his position was assured), towards a city of which it has been said that "she had neither the virtue to preserve her liberty nor the docility to bear servitude." Surely, in spite of all the hankerings and aspirations after a liberty she had never truly known, it is to Cosimo's praise that it can be said of his government of Florence: "The people, torn by faction, now lived at peace, enjoying even justice and an incorrupt administration, hitherto very rare<sup>1</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. III. p. 395.

## CHAPTER XI

### CHANGES IN FLORENCE—CONCLUSION

“Er kennte Land und Leute,” says Reumont of Cosimo, and it was indeed a fair land that he knew. Northwards lay the slopes of the Apennines, chestnut-clad on their heights and lower down silvery-grey with the tossing sea of olives, no less fruitful. Westward was the exquisite coast-line of the Mediterranean littoral, curving into bays, dotted with islands where, in the sheltered harbours of Livorno or of Portoferraio on Elba, the new galleys rode safely at anchor, guarded from the heights by the lately built forts of la Stella and il Falcone. Tuscan were the fertile inland valleys, the little towns that perched on hill-tops and looked from their battlemented walls over an expanse of undulating land, now gleaming here and there like emerald where the young wheat was growing under trailing vines, now glowing red as the autumn sun shone on the broad leaves of the terraced vineyards. Here were lakes, on whose indented shores there nestled other towns, white specks against the dark-clad hills shrouded in ilex groves, above which on the bare ridges crumbled some frowning baronial tower. Such a state, numbering gems like Arezzo, Pisa, Siena Florence, was indeed, to use Fedeli’s words, “charming and brimming over with delights.” It is bordered, Priuli tells us, by the States of the Church on the south, by the Duchy of Urbino and the Romagna on the east and north-east; on the north by the Duchy of Ferrara, the Bolognese, Lucchese and Genoese territory and the Marquisate of Malaspina; by the lands of Casa Farnese towards the Lunigiana and Pontremoli on the extreme western boundary, while in the south-

west it touches the possessions of the most Catholic King, who holds the coast fortresses of Talamone, Port' Ercole and Orbetello.

In Cosimo's accurate memory was stored a mine of details as to these varied lands. He could tell how such a town lay situate and if the slopes below it had an exposure favourable for his experiments in agriculture, for his mulberry trees or olives. He knew what rivers intersected the hills and the height of those hills, and whether they had in them veins of silver or other minerals to make them worth working. It was hard to find a question relating to the physical features of Tuscany which he could not answer. The depth of river mouths, the times of the tides in different places, minute information on all ports, shores, sand-banks, islands or towns situate by the sea—on these and many other points he could talk like a native<sup>1</sup>. We may observe here again how much of his attention was given to matters connected with the coast, and so indirectly with his loved navy.

But the sea was by no means his only concern. The important work of fortification had to be carried on, and the no less urgent work of draining and repeopling the marshy land round Pisa and in the Maremma of Siena. If Cosimo ever indulged in retrospect, he must have had much food for reflection when he meditated on the altered state of Tuscany; and, looked at from its material side in particular, much of the change due to him was good. His fair land, what with bad government and still more with war and all the horrors that come in its train, had been in a poor state at his accession. Towns were depopulated, villages were destroyed, the countryside was laid waste and misery and suffering everywhere to be seen. And now, thirty years later, the Duke might look with pride on the improvements visible as he travelled about his lands. Pisa, half

<sup>1</sup> Cantini, *op. cit.* p. 482.

depopulated, half destroyed, a fever haunt, was a flourishing city before his death with a population more than doubled. Cosimo spent many months there, delighting as he did in being near the sea, while the Duchess benefited by the milder climate. Here was the old University, revived and extended by him; here Vasari designed the palace of the Knights of S. Stefano, so that they were ever associated with Pisa. It was the Archbishopric of Pisa that was given to Giovanni the favourite son, and, of all the towns once subject to Florence, Pisa it was that had most cause to rejoice in Cosimo's more gentle rule. Next to Pisa, Livorno was the Duke's favourite haunt and up to his last years he was engaged in planning for the development of its dockyard and harbour. Near by, at Antignano, he had bought land which was made charming by groves of orange, lemon and citron trees, while vineyards and olive-yards took the place of brushwood and thickets<sup>1</sup>.

Round Florence the ducal villas were painted and decorated and rebuilt to suit the taste of the day. Only Careggi, the haunt of Cosimo il Vecchio and Lorenzo il Magnifico, was left much as Michelozzo had planned it, and its fifteenth century *cortile* was untouched, though the court painters Pontormo and il Bronzino were busied within. Dearer to Cosimo was Castello, where Giovanni delle Bande Nere had lived as a boy and where his son had first mounted a horse. It lies, as Vasari describes it, "at the roots of Monte Morello, and beneath the Villa of La Topaia....It has before it a plain which descends very gradually and within the space of about a mile and a half to the river Arno." On this sunny slope stands the villa and, while Pontormo and other artists were engaged to cover the walls with graceful figures and arabesques, Niccolo del Tribolo had the care of laying out the gardens and

<sup>1</sup> Galluzzi, *op. cit.* vol. III. p. 237.

setting up marble fountains. Nor were pine woods and cypress woods lacking nor a labyrinth, in the centre of which stood Niccolo's masterpiece. It was indeed an age of fountains, and few pages of descriptive Italian literature are pleasanter than those which tell of cool retreats where the glitter and splash of falling water refresh the senses, no less than the deep shade of evergreen oaks and tall box hedges. Even in the turbulence of the opening years of the Cinquecento, Bandello's lords and ladies found time to linger in sheltered gardens on green plots of grass by the water's edge. And so here at Castello there may well have been "a sound most pleasing and even harmonious...of the raining and trickling and pouring of water<sup>1</sup>"; here too, in the fountain basins there would be finest white gravel, and fishes swimming in the clear water, and shells of mother-of-pearl and deep cushioned moss and slender black stems of delicate maiden hair glittering with drops from the spouting jets. Nor would be wanting some *pergola* of vines or other over-arching green to diffuse a sense of mystery as well as of grateful coolness. So thickly grew the mulberry trees—first planted in Tuscany by Cosimo—that they made a vault under which to walk in the shade. Only the gleam of marble or the cold sparkle of water was pleasant to Italian eyes, wearied by excess of sunshine and longing ever for subdued light, for shaded walks and dim recesses. As for Poggio a Caiano, where the Court so often went for hunting, avenues, fountains and aqueducts were added, Cosimo in this as in other things, remaining true to the traditions of his family.

Perhaps, however, it was in Florence itself that the Duke, riding or walking in later years, would be most conscious of the changes that had come about in his day. He had failed to entice to Florence the one

<sup>1</sup> Annibal Caro, *Lettere famigliari*, vol. I. p. 38, for descriptions of fountains at Naples.



*School of Vasari*

FLORENCE MERCATO VECCHIO  
From a picture in the Palazzo Vecchio

*Photo Brogi*



giant still living, Michelangiolo. But he made the most of the material available, nor was this, with the serious exception of that prince of bunglers, Baccio Bandinelli, altogether to be despised. No lover of Florence can fail to be grateful to Bartolommeo Ammanati who, after the great flood of 1557, built Trinità Bridge. The graceful arches of the Mercato Nuovo, the work of Giovambattista Tasso, once had a pendant in those of the Loggie del Pesce in the Mercato Vecchio, and Vasari who built these latter had a happier hand in architecture than in painting. He was, indeed, the soul of the many new undertakings and on the friendliest terms with the Duke, who shows at his best in the many references to him and his court scattered through Vasari's correspondence and biographies. In fact, though a poor painter, Vasari, as his *Lives* alone would prove, was a man of real ability. We may almost forget the figures that sprawl over walls and cupolas in meaningless affectation for the sake of his vivid pen-pictures of his fellow-artists, which, with their scraps of kindly gossip, make the past so real to us. And, although Vasari's pretensions to artistic fame nowadays make the reader smile, his work of architectural restoration in the Palazzo Ducale was not without value. For, in that happy age, some unfailing sense of what was pleasing to the eye in colour and proportion seemed innate in every architect, so that even where the artistic merit of each detail was not great, a harmonious whole was none the less evolved. Here, as always, Cosimo was acquainted with all particulars, supervising artists and architects no less carefully than secretaries and auditors. Not without cause we may trace his name on the worn tiled floors of the old palace, and see in clear-cut letters: *Cosm. Medic. Dux Flore: II.*, or decipher his *imprese* in fading red and dim ochreous yellow, here the capricorn, here the tortoise with its sail. Sobriety and taste still

lingered among the traditions of the day, making such engraving seem preferable to the pomp of gilt-lettering, or ceilings, gaudily embossed.

The Duke, however, had no intention of foregoing what was his due. When Vasari designed a picture in which his master was taking counsel with his ministers over the Sienese war, Cosimo promptly wrote: "this circle of councillors is no wise necessary, for we were alone, but you might well put a figure of Silence and some such other virtues which would have the same significance as these councillors<sup>1</sup>." As a result, Cosimo was painted seated alone at a table on which was spread a plan of Siena. Round him were figures of Vigilance and Patience seated; Fortitude and Prudence, and Silence, finger on lip. Cosimo, indeed, was always full of suggestions. On the ceiling of the great hall in the Palazzo Ducale, for instance, he desired that:

in one of the sections there should be seen all our state together, signifying what has been added to it; and for each story depicted, there needs must be some motto or word the better to express what is figured<sup>2</sup>.

And most of the references to Cosimo in Vasari's letters are pleasant reading:

"The Duke," he writes (as usual to Borghini), "dragged me... to Livorno, and last night a great fever fell on me, with cold and then with heat, so that I was all of a sweat. Whereat his Excellency, moved with compassion, would not take me back to Antignoiano (*sic*). The rest of yesterday hath benefited me, and the Duke's despatching all I set before him, both on his account and on mine, cured me last evening. I handed him a memorial wherein I asked much and many things; he hath writ with his own hand: 'We are content with all'.... (Livorno, 22 Marzo nel 60)<sup>3</sup>."

And there is a graceful touch in another letter worth recording as it shows a certain gratitude towards one whose praise or blame could henceforth have little

<sup>1</sup> Galluzzi, *op. cit* vol. II. p. 218.

<sup>2</sup> Gaye, *Carteggio degli Artisti*, vol. III. p. 106 (to Vasari).

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, p. 58.

weight, since in 1573 Cosimo was living, as the Venetian ambassador unfeelingly remarked, "more like a plant than a man." Together with the inscriptions below commonplace frescoes in the Sala Regia in the Vatican, Vasari desired, so he wrote, that there should also be the following words:

*Georgius Vasarius Aretin. Cosmi Magni Etruriae Ducis alumnus perficiebat... in such wise that in this place the words: Cosmi Magni Etruriae D. should ever be seen more plainly than my part therein<sup>1</sup>.*

Cosimo was interested in everything. Now it was the new stained-glass windows in the Palazzo Vecchio (which could not have been done better, says Vasari, than they were by Borro, a painter of Arezzo), now it was the designs for tapestries to be made by the Flemings specially summoned to Florence, among the cartoons for which inevitably figured the story of Joseph<sup>2</sup>. Or it was the plans for the rebuilding of Palazzo Pitti which absorbed him almost as much as they did the architect, Bartolommeo Ammanati. Here too were gardens to be laid out and Cosimo writes indignantly to his Provveditore, "...as to the firs for the gardens of the Pitti and of Poggio a Caiano, you have delayed so long that the weather has broken and thus it is with other things of ours." On another occasion it is questions of art that concern him. "As you will be sought by Benvenuto Cellini, we bid you not to fail to arrange him a shelter where to work at the base of his Perseus, with all the conveniences suited to such work<sup>3</sup>." When once the beautiful bronze statue was set up in the Loggia Ducale (later to be called the Loggia dei Lanzi) Eleonora from her sunny window could look down on it and on the *Gigante della Piazza*, Michelangelo's David. To Cosimo indeed, the thought of

<sup>1</sup> Gaye, *op. cit.* p. 378

<sup>2</sup> Conti, *op. cit.* p. 53

<sup>3</sup> *Arch. di Stato, Firenze, Carte Stroziane* XXXV.

Michelangiolo was never free from regret, so dearly did he long to have him at his court, to have even a design from him for the Church of San Giovanni de' Fiorentini in Rome. Failing this, he did at least carry on the building of the Laurentian Library according to Michelangiolo's plans. When he visited the master in Rome "not only did he desire that he should keep his head covered, but that he should sit as it were between his knees. I say not near him, nor at his side as Pope Julius would have had him do, but betwixt his knees...<sup>1</sup>." A letter from the Duke to Michelangiolo shows him at his best, full of that real respect for genius which is so fine a characteristic of the day:

"Since," he writes, "the nature of the times and the reports of your friends give us some hope that you may not be wholly averse from wishing to make a journey to Florence, to revisit your native place after so many years and to see your own possessions (*le cose vostre*)—as for us, this would be a great delight, which we have ever much wished for. We thought it behoved us, with this letter of ours, to exhort and beg you, as we do exhort and beg of you, to do so, with all our heart, persuading you that the sight of you will be most acceptable to us. Nor let any doubt withhold you, that we might propose to burden you with any sort of fatigue or vexation, we knowing well what respect is due both to your age and to your singular gifts. But come freely, and promise yourself that you shall pass what time it seems good to you to dwell here wholly to your own liking and satisfaction. For to us 'twill suffice to see you here, and for the rest, our pleasure will be the greater in proportion to your recreation and quiet<sup>2</sup>."

Letters and learning the Duke also favoured, reviving the University of Pisa, promoting the usefulness of the Studio Fiorentino at Florence, sanctioning the formation of a Florentine Academy, specially devoted to preserving the polish and purity of the Tuscan speech.

<sup>1</sup> G. Bianchini, *Dei Granduchi di Toscana...* (Venezia, MDCCXLI), p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Gaye, *op. cit.* vol. II. p. 418.

We need not multiply such instances, but may dwell on the protection and encouragement given to all branches of science. For this was a distinctive trait of the later Medici princes, and while they duly kept up a traditional interest in art it was the scientific side of life that most attracted them. Cosimo, as a good agriculturalist, was deeply interested in botany and he it was who first had medicinal plants brought from America and tried to acclimatise them in Italy. The Botanic Garden of Pisa was so rich in simples that it could supply all parts of the peninsula with specimens. New fruits were introduced from the East, and trees to adorn the roads and make *boschetti di delizia* came from distant provinces. Catherine de Médicis and the Emperor Maximilian begged Cosimo for plants and gardeners. Philip II, when laying out gardens at Aranjuez, asked for plants and fruits lacking in Spain<sup>1</sup>. As for Eleonora, she daily added exotic treasures to the new gardens of Boboli, and her hanging gardens in the Palazzo Ducale were, we learn, the marvel of the city. Tradition has credited the Medici with a knowledge of deadly drugs, and there is no denying that Cosimo had a leaning to chemistry, and that his crucibles and retorts in the Palazzo Ducale were used, not only for trying to make gold, but also for experimenting in poisons. Galluzzi, however, adds that his laboratory was chiefly famous for medicinal remedies, and this was probably what gave rise to the other rumours, which, like all those to the discredit of the Medici, seem marvellously long lived. In these interests Francesco shared, vying with his father as a chemist. He also delighted in glass-blowing and in the making and setting of gems, in which he showed extreme skill. And he succeeded in finding out the secret of producing a paste as fine as that of Oriental china, devoting to such pursuits the time his father spent on sport.

<sup>1</sup> Galluzzi, *op. cit.* vol. II. p. 252.

Cosimo's tastes were as varied as his energy was boundless. A collector of antiques (Vasari must by hook or by crook get him "the peasant sharpening his knife<sup>1</sup>"); something of a connoisseur in medals of which he had a fine show; versed in all practical questions relating to mining, to agriculture, to ship-building. The catalogue of his lighter occupations is astonishing, when we consider as well his intense political activity and his unsleeping vigilance in all that concerned his state. No wonder that he rose with the dawn, tiring out his secretaries by his unflagging energy, or that at times he withdrew into solitary places to collect his thoughts. Often when he seemed bent only on hunting or hawking he had grave matters on his mind, and thus, his body refreshed with the keen invigorating hill air, his thoughts worked more subtly, and he could return to his desk having found the key to the riddle before him.

Florence, then, greatly owing to the Duke's activity, was a good deal altered even materially. The bridges (for Ponte Carraia too was built in these days), the churches, the palaces, all bore traces of change. The town with its more modern air gained in brightness; the days of the narrowest streets, frowned on by tall towers, were past—and no doubt regretted by many a good Florentine. There was indeed inevitably a great transformation in manners, even in thought, since the day when Cosimo had come down from the villa of il Trebbio, to return to it no longer a simple citizen. Florence had by now acquiesced in the new conditions and was doing her best to become a courtly aristocratic city. But outward refinement and elegance compensated poorly, in the opinion of the older men, for the practical aspirations of the past. The citizens were poorer, because the younger men, instead of attending to their shops or merchandise, were all anxious to turn courtier

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* the statue in the Uffizi Gallery known as *L'Arrotino*.

and share in the new gaiety despised by their elders. This led to few marriages, as men feared to let their daughters marry lest they should not be well off, and also—a cogent reason—because they had to pay a tax of one-tenth on their dowries<sup>1</sup>. Galluzzi points out moreover how the cleavage between nobles and people tended to increase with the spread of refinement observable in those about the court and with the growth of idleness and love of luxury. Instead of aspiring to public office, men now aspired to titles and tokens of personal consideration. And, although in Cosimo's lifetime the people were ever considered, having easy access to him and profiting by the strict justice he enforced, under Francesco the evils of despotic government were more clearly seen.

That there was morally a change for the worse can perhaps scarcely be said. But the only obvious gain was in decency of speech and correctness of manners for, as has been already said, the soil of the Florentine Republic during its last years was not likely to bring forth good fruit for a long time to come. The clergy were in a lawless state for many years after Cosimo's accession, and the fact that the Archbishop of Florence, Altoviti, was a rebel and consequently in exile, set a bad example. In convents and monasteries great disorder prevailed. With the hope of improving the example set by the regulars, Cosimo took Santa Maria Novella from the Dominicans and gave it to the Observants, for these, being a reformed branch of the Franciscan order, kept their rule more strictly. But repression and severity did little to improve vicious practices, and the unhappy effects of Pius V's zeal were felt in Florence, mild as was the Inquisition there. Some good in the way of softening unruly spirits may have been done by the Duke's introduction of the Jesuits with their new methods of education

<sup>1</sup> Albèri, *Rel. di Lorenzo Priuli*, vol. II. serie ii. p. 71.

and their still fresh enthusiasm. In them, it has been said:

the depressed Romanists of the sixteenth century saw... a body of men whom no difficulties daunted, who spent themselves in training boys and girls and in animating them with religious principles; who persuaded boys and youths to attend daily mass, to resort to monthly confession, to study the articles of their faith; who elevated that obedience which for generations they had been taught was due to the earthly head of the Church, into a sublime religious principle<sup>1</sup>.

The change from the days of Lorenzo il Magnifico, when the leading citizen of Florence wrote his carnival songs in all too great a spirit of licence, could hardly be better exemplified than by the action of its present Duke in insisting on at least outward decency and orderliness of behaviour, a poor substitute, indeed, for true reform but possibly of some use as a preparation for it. Lorenzo, had he come to life again, would surely have found some difficulty in suiting himself to the new gravity of demeanour, and still more of conversation, now prevalent in Florence. The festivities and gaieties of a court had not the old *sans-gêne* of republican days. The citizens, no longer summoned to council in the Palazzo Vecchio, no longer able to change the policy of the Republic by their will, now listened with interest to the latest court gossip, and were prompt to bend their heads or doff their caps if one of the ducal family passed by. Scrupulous they were too in all religious observance, speaking of the Pope, if with no particular respect, at least with more ceremony than of old. Lorenzo, one may surmise, would have pronounced the new state of things very dull, and have thought that the Duke made a toil out of that government which to Lorenzo had been as much pastime as labour. But any citizen who had lived through the evils of war and of a popular government both turbulent and harsh would be more ready to bless the strong hand which had

<sup>1</sup> T. Lindsay, *History of the Reformation*, vol. II. p. 610.



School of Vasari

FLORENCE. PIAZZA FRESCOBALDI

From a picture in the Palazzo Vecchio

Photo Brogi



secured an unknown peace and had saved Florence from a terror unforeseen by Lorenzo, the rule of the Spaniard.

And, though no words betray the feeling, we need not doubt that Cosimo loved his native place, living and dying as he did within the sound of its church bells. "In Florence I was born, in Rome I died," said Niccolo Strozzi, "nor need any wish for another place where to be born and to die," but to your true Florentine only half the epitaph had meaning<sup>1</sup>. To Cosimo, whose keen eyes were alive to every detail, the narrow sunless streets of Florence were endeared by many an association. The massive brown *palazzi* of rough stone, little adorned but for a graceful window, a wrought-iron bracket, or such a delicate bit of fancy as the Rucellai loggia, told him in heraldic figures the tale of past Florentine greatness. Here were blazoned the crescents of the Strozzi, here snarled the lean white wolf of the Altoviti. The hunting horns of the Guicciardini in Oltr' Arno recalled to him passages of his youth, and the slender dolphins of the Pazzi or the Pandolfini had a certain significance for this Medici; the annulets of the Albizzi were dumb reminders of one of the first triumphs of his family. On many a building, Republican Florence lived again in his thoughts, revived by the sight of the trampling eagle of Parte Guelfa, or the Agnus Dei of the guild of Wool, yet to Cosimo in after life all such associations were mellowed, for they were all part of Florence, and the charm of Florence is not to be denied. In all ages her votaries have had little hesitation in dismissing the rival claims of other gems in the crown of Italy. No gleaming vision moves them of white-walled palaces inlaid with porphyry and *verde antico*, patterned with diaper-work of delicate red and white; Naples and Genoa for all their setting of sea

<sup>1</sup> *Roma mihi tribuit tumulum, Florentia vitam;*  
*Nemo alio vellet nasci et obire loco.*

and hills leave them untouched; not even the spell of Rome can hold them long, though she lies, sunsmitten, a glory of gold ringed by the wide purple Campagna. And who can say they are wrong? Like Venice, Florence is the city of a dream that has come true, so matchless is that cluster of Cathedral, baptistery and bell-tower, so perfect the grouping of it all—towers, domes, spires, tiled roofs—in the heart of the hills. Delicately the hills encircle the city, crested to the westward with sentinel cypresses etched inky black against the sunset sky; rounded and olive-clad to the south beyond San Miniato; high and bare and purple, snow-capped in early winter, to the east where the river steals from between them, and once again spreading to the north, in range after range; faint and blue in the distance, oak-clad and cypress-clad nearer at hand, till by soft gradations they melt, “olive sandalled” into the wide misty plain where the Arno gleams, a riband of gold. For Arno has many moods. One day it flows sunset-lit and golden towards the western sea, the next it roars, a tawny swollen torrent, swirling furiously about the sturdy piers of the old brown bridges. And then, wearied with impotent rage, purging itself of sand and filth, it glides once more serene and silent through the city, reflecting on its stream now translucent, green as jade, the exquisite arches by which it is spanned.

There is no doubt a moral to point in the story of Cosimo; there is to some extent a Nemesis that has dogged his memory. The moral we take to be the old one, that too great ambition defeats its own ends; the Nemesis that, although when seen truly Cosimo appears a man imbued to an unusual degree with a love of justice, with more regard for the welfare of his subjects than was at all common in his day, his enemies have nevertheless prevailed, so that for many years his name has been tarnished and he has been a by-word for

cruelty and oppression. For evil brings its own penalty and Cosimo gave more than one handle to his enemies. His restless ambition led him to intrigue and spy, his sternness made him a dreaded master but never a loved one. Secrecy, degenerating into dissimulation, gives only too much opportunity to a man's enemies for reading between the lines or putting a possibly unjust construction on his actions, and from such malicious interpretation Cosimo has in truth suffered much. As to his ambitious projects, it is indeed astonishing how many of them he by his skill and resolution carried out. From his early schemes to rid Florentine territory of Spanish troops and garrisons to his later dreams of having a strong independent state of Tuscany, holding the casting vote in French and Imperial politics, he had few failures to count. Nor can any Italian reproach him for aiming to preserve the dignity and freedom of his states against the encroachment of Spain. To some extent he set the seal on his efforts and proclaimed to the world the advance he had made on the day of his coronation as Grand Duke, yet it was not till the time of Ferdinando I that much advantage accrued from this to the Grand Duchy. In fact, it is possible that unbroken success had slightly warped the Duke's judgment, for the cost of the victory over Siena should have taught him that it would be more prudent to content himself with what he had. It was an ironical fate that, having striven all his life to be independent of Spain, having directed his first efforts to removing Spanish garrisons from his lands, his own ambition was now to thwart him. He felt, said Fedeli, as if he had a dagger at his throat so long as he was not absolute master of Siena. But in order virtually to be master of it, Cosimo had henceforth to submit to be the vassal of Spain and to endure the galling presence of Spanish commandants in his coast fortresses. He very probably, at the time this was stipulated, hoped to buy his

freedom as he had done before, but, in the changed conditions this was not to be, and he realised how irksome was dependence when he had to wait on the wishes of Philip II in the affair of Corsica.

Here, then, the Duke's ambition betrayed him, for the price he paid was scarcely worth what he gained, since, even before the days of Siena, still more before the acquisition of his new title, Cosimo was already reckoned, next to the Pope, the most important figure in Italy. But his new honours, which were won in despite of Philip II and not without forcing the hand of Pius V, brought Cosimo little real advantage, while they swelled the general dislike and jealousy felt for him to a very storm of protest. With Philip who, when amiably disposed, called him *Sagacity*, and when annoyed "an old fox," he had never been on very friendly terms, the King of Spain having an uneasy sense that he had been outwitted in the matter of Siena. It was distinctly pleasant to him that he could thwart new ambitions and put his veto on Cosimo's accepting the proposals made by the Corsicans. Cosimo in his turn learnt the lesson and planned that his next step should depend less on one whom it was so distasteful to him to recognise his suzerain. This time he succeeded. Though Philip fumed and the Imperial Court stormed and delayed to recognise his title, though the Pope declared he had been tricked, none the less the Grand Duke remained serene, confident that none of them could in the end withstand him. Nor could they indeed, but Cosimo's reputation did not gain by his manoeuvres. Materially, however, he was triumphant. Venice which had so long hesitated to send an ambassador to the new Duke, from the year 1561 onwards was careful to be represented at Florence. Ferrara, after a long and fierce struggle for precedence, could not but realise, ten years later, that she was finally worsted. But it was a precarious position; one false step and Cosimo's

footing would be gone. Savoy dreaded his increasing influence; Ferrara and Mantua hankered for precedence over Florence; Urbino feared him and Genoa no less, for he had tried to recover Sarzana (once a Florentine possession); the Lucchesi, we know, watched him as a sparrow watches a hawk about to swoop. The Duke had done much to keep peace in Italy, and was always wont to urge that his interests were those of his fellow-princes. But here again his known ambition foiled him and there is some truth in Fedeli's words: "He revealed himself too soon," says he, and dangers surrounded him. "All his affairs are in a strained state, and ever in manifest danger, for only by dint of rigour and fear and terror doth he keep himself on his feet<sup>1</sup>."

Good fortune, however, aided Cosimo. Fedeli wrote while the memories of the Sienese war, with all its harshness and cruelty, were still fresh and before the milder régime had begun which brought a content and happiness to Tuscany such as had not been known for many years, making internal revolt far less probable. And, as far as the courts of Spain and Austria were concerned, their intense interest in Italy was over, now that Spanish rule was accepted and dully acquiesced in through so large a part of the peninsula. The danger of French intervention was now only sufficient to make them sensible that the Duke of Florence must not be so far alienated as to become dangerous by turning to Paris for sympathy. Spain moreover had seen her days of greatest glory and no longer busied herself to the same extent with what lay beyond her immediate boundaries, and Austria had given up all idea of imperial descents into Italy.

Thus, the one state which had felt the stir of new tendencies, which, instead of cherishing fond memories of a golden past, was awakening to a consciousness that the new régime had brought it vastly increasing

<sup>1</sup> *Relaz. cit.* p. 382.

prestige and fresh possibilities of expansion, was left in peace. Untroubled by foreign intervention, Tuscany was able to grow aware of its powers and to serve, however imperfectly, as a model to other duchies and principalities throughout Italy. Cosimo, in brief, left to his sons a well-guarded, well-provisioned state. He had, as far as he understood the matter, furthered the commercial interests of Tuscany. He had built fortresses on his frontiers, and galleys for the defence of his coasts, and his trained bands would have delighted the heart of Macchiavelli. He had drained the swamps and re-peopled waste places. He left the revenues free of all mortgages or other encumbrances; the credit of Tuscany stood high and the prestige of the name of Medici was great. There seemed a general idea abroad that the Grand Duke must be consulted by more than one crowned head. During the unsatisfactory and rather sordid years of Francesco's rule, there was no doubt a decline. One evil example perhaps led to another, and we may be glad that Cosimo did not live to see his favourite daughter murdered by her husband, and this, only a few days after Pietro, youngest of the Medici brothers, had himself murdered his wife. There seemed a sudden outbreak of such violence and bloodshed as is looked on as almost normal in the annals of the Medici. But Francesco, perhaps fortunately, left no heir, and in Ferdinando, Cosimo found a worthy successor, at once capable and benevolent, who, consciously or unconsciously, did much to vindicate his father as a ruler.

Only one weapon was left to Cosimo's enemies and they made the most of it. Slanderous tongues have been busier with no name than with his, and it is only in comparatively recent years that the untrustworthiness of many vile rumours has become known. The honest Florentines of the first fifty years of the nineteenth century welcomed anything that could blacken the name of

so hateful a creature as an absolute ruler and there seem even now to be certain people who, rather than accept Cosimo as a man of like passions with ourselves, prefer to picture him as melodramatically wicked. No doubt it is rather the Duke's intellect than his character which is worthy of study, and his life with all its intrigues, its dissimulation, its passions, was far from blameless, yet he does not deserve the detestation which has clouded his memory nor the persistent reproach of double dealing. The subtle Italian mind cannot be fairly judged by our blunt northern wits unless we make due allowance for the different standard. There is, then, reason to believe that Cosimo was sincere when he wrote thus to the luckless Giulio Cybò Malaspina: "Remember that two things are to be prized by whoso has to govern; the one justice, the other, his word and plighted faith<sup>1</sup>." It is indeed surprising, as well as instructive, to observe how much of the current distrust and distaste for the Duke of Florence seem based on such outbursts as those of the exiles in the year 1537. The *fuorusciti* at Venice and elsewhere throughout their lives never readjusted their estimate of the Tuscan Tiberius. And posterity, until documentary evidence silenced the more serious writers, has complacently echoed the calumnies which only the bitterness of disappointed ambition can excuse.

We could wish Cosimo a tomb in the old Sacristy of San Lorenzo. He lived by choice rather like the head of a great family than a prince, he preferred his one frugal meal a day to sumptuous banquets. He was Duke of Florence, but also essentially a Florentine citizen, to whom his city was the apple of his eye. Surely he had more affinity with the severe lines and simple taste of Donatello's or Verrocchio's day than with the variegated mosaics and excess of gilding that weary the eye in the dismal mausoleum where he lies.

<sup>1</sup> L. Staffetti, *Giulio Cybò Malaspina*, p. 144.

A kindlier fate raised him a statue from the hand of Giambologna, and his stern face still frowns on the loiterers in the piazza, renamed from him, the Piazza del Granduca.

We need to weigh one thing with another and not to leave out of account Cosimo's aspirations, for who would dare be judged by achievement alone? Remembering this, it may be we shall think that a little tablet in the remote Via Giulia, near the Florentine Church of San Giovanni in Rome, pays a tribute which is not more than his due. *Cosimo Medici*, it runs, *Duci Floren. II. pacis atque justitiae cultori.*

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